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CHOSEN WORDS

FROM

CHRISTIAN WRITERS.

CHOSEN WORDS

FROM CHRISTIAN WRITERS,

ON

RELIGION:

ITS EVIDENCES, TRIALS, PRIVILEGES, OBLIGATIONS.

EDITED BY

THE AUTHOR OF J. S.

"Thoughts on Devotion," "An Autumn Dream,"
"The Christian Harp," etc.

"Illæ continuo saltus sylvasque peragrant,
Purpureosque metant flores."—*Virg.*

"Floriferis ut apes in saltibus omnia libant,
Omnia nos itidem depascimur aurea dicta."—*Lucr.*

"Doth not a bee gather honey out of many flowers? Though some flowers be far better than others, she takes what serves her purpose."—
Hours with the Mystics

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INSCRIPTION

TO

S. A. D. S.

My Dearest,

Accept one more attempt of your husband's pen. It is only a compilation of the thoughts of other minds; but the names annexed will show that they deserve attention. May some of these words prove instructive and strengthening, when I can be no longer with you; above all, may we, by the infinite mercy of God our Saviour, meet in that abode where the feebleness and limitation of all earthly thoughts shall be exchanged for the full inspirations of light and love, from their Eternal Source.

Yours ever,

J. S.

The Cottage, Frome,
March, 1869.

INTRODUCTION.

In the eighty-fourth year of life, it is wiser (or less unwise) to collect some thoughts of others, than to offer many of one's own. These few prefatory pages, however, have been named "Introduction," because it is believed that some readers, very mistakenly, pass by a preface as useless, whereas it is in fact often important for the right judgment and reception of what follows;—because also they are an introduction to various authors, some of whose names indeed are familiar to most, others less generally known and appreciated.

No workman (with the pen or otherwise) willingly undertakes a task without hoping for profit of *some* sort. In the present instance, gain of money or reputation cannot at all be reckoned on, since the volume will to many be quite unattractive.

But the compiler has gained from it greater interest in his private readings, while choosing and pursuing them with a view to these collections, and may hope, by some of them at least, to edify himself and a few others who shall find "the words of the wise as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies."

This hope has led him to read, or *re*-read, and in several instances translate, passages which in all likelihood he would not else have perused or even sought for. As such a volume will be oftener referred to, dipt into, or read partly, than read *through*, no attempt to classify its subjects has been thought needful or advisable. It could not, in fact, have been successful or complete; and the index will readily guide all readers to such topics or authors as they may respectively prefer.

It may appear to certain zealous Christians that too large a portion of these extracts are drawn from writings defensive of the *evidences* of religion, both natural and revealed. They will allege, and with truth, that saving faith is of the heart, and from the Holy Spirit's teaching, and that other

evidences, of whatever kind, are inefficient to produce it; thence inferring that such are needless for those who possess true faith, and unavailing for those who do not.

From this *inference* I entirely dissent. If such men as Barrow, Baxter, Huet, Halyburton, Cecil, Newton, have known and related the doubtings and conflicts of others, and have avowed their own,* it cannot be that a corroboration of faith from the various sources of evidence is superfluous or profitless. It may, however, be said (and I suppose correctly), no unbeliever will care even to open your volume. I would add, if any one *did*, there would still be little prospect that he would rightly weigh its arguments. But the passages in question are rather designed for a quite different class of readers,—for persons "haunted," as Baxter expresses it, by doubts which they desire above all things to have scattered or subdued. I trust that some such may find a measure of relief, from even the brief reasonings put before them here;

* See the words of those writers in the introduction to "Thoughts at Seventy-nine," pp. 14–17, and in that of "The Divine Origin," etc. (now out of print), pp. 12–17.

may draw thence some "reasons for repose," for perseverance, and for prayer. A good man, who had been the pupil of a zealous foreign divine, once expressed to me his deep regret at not having then been grounded and versed in the evidences of religion, although carefully trained in its special doctrines, and in its observances. "For," said he, "when I afterwards had to mix with the world, my faith became sadly perplexed and unsettled, from the assaults made on it both in books and in society." If this were so in his day, and in still earlier times, surely the danger is augmented now, when theories of materialism and positivism, and other subtle forms of unbelief, meet us at every turn, not only advocated in large treatises, but sown broadcast in periodical literature, insinuated in cheap journals, and bandied in conversation; when also the multiplication of readers, and the apparent increase of mental activity, lay open greater numbers of every rank to these influences and impressions.

It is felt, therefore, to be quite desirable that a *main* object of these selections should be to corroborate, from the arguments and personal convic-

tions of many powerful and thoughtful minds, the proofs that religion is true; for, after all, some lurking doubt of this is the canker at the root of faith and all its fruits.

Very many books in the present day (perhaps too many) are written for the young; this more especially for the elder, and for the busy: for those who have read long, and have not now application or leisure to study systematic treatises. There are also, with most readers, and at every age, occasions when the aim is to occupy profitably only a few unclaimed or vacant minutes. In these the editor expects his volume may be looked into with advantage by himself, therefore perhaps by others.

Such a collection may likewise incidentally teach what many need to have impressed on them: how very much Christians of widely-differing subordinate opinions have yet agreed in tenets by far the most essential and fundamental. A selection of their *prayers* might evince and illustrate this fact more fully. Some such are inserted,* and readers conversant with Christian biography know how widely, in various respects, their offerers differed.

* See pp. 290–299.

It will be seen also that while the prayers are greatly dissimilar, and some of them may appear materially defective, there are yet not wanting certain cardinal points of resemblance and agreement amongst them all. This, indeed, by the whole tenor of the present volume, is sufficiently shown, to discommend the too frequent alienation of Christians from each other.

Perhaps it will seem unfit or negligent, that the selections here offered are so mixed; without chronological arrangement, or regard to the very diverse characters and schools of the authors cited; —as that Brydayne * should be next to Vinet, or Clemens Romanus to Lavater;—but this is not more confused or incongruous than the juxtaposition of all sorts of books in some libraries, which is often suitable and convenient, though it looks irregular.

I will further remark, although there are ex-

* Brydayne (sometimes spelt Bridaine), was a most ardent and indefatigable Roman-Catholic missionary in France, whose earnestness and eloquence produced surprising effects. Vinet was an eminent Protestant professor at Lausanne. His character was highly esteemed, and his writings are much valued.

tracts which lose somewhat of their weight by being detached from their context, they yet retain a large share of it; and if any should be induced by these to consult the works whence they have been taken, additional benefit may arise from the study thus suggested and pursued. I am quite aware that there can be found passages in several of those books more striking and eloquent than the portions here chosen; but I have been chiefly guided in my choice by what has seemed most useful and edifying.

The extracts from foreign writers, both ancient and modern, are translated faithfully and closely. None, except those from Vinet, have been very much condensed or abridged. In this instance it was necessary, because the writer's arguments could not be fairly presented (without going into much greater length than was desirable), except by framing a sort of *ab*stract.

The same method was required in the extract from Charnock. In some paragraphs of the older writers, both English and foreign, a few obsolete words, and some which would be repugnant to modern taste, are replaced by others.

Where the style was diffuse, there is considerable abridgment, but in no case any deviation from the author's meaning. Some foreign names, as Johann Arndt, Brydayne, La Bruyère, may be little known to most readers, but I think the sentiments translated from them will be found of some value.

A few recent and even living writers are cited, both for the intrinsic worth of their thoughts, and to show that ability in treating theological and moral topics has not declined, but rather, in some instances, advanced, and become more impressive.

The works of certain authors here introduced are well known to contain *other* doctrines and opinions which the compiler wholly disapproves,*

* The strongest instance of this is perhaps Jacob Behmen. But although he was a strangely visionary mystic, his piety is well attested. The late Rev. Alfred Vaughan thus quotes the judgment of Dr. Henry More concerning him, which he terms "discriminating and impartial:"—"As for Jacob Behmen, I do not see but that he holds firm the fundamentals of the Christian religion, and that his mind was firmly united to the Head of the Church, the crucified Jesus, to whom he breathed out this short ejaculation with much fervency of spirit upon his deathbed: 'Lord Jesus, have mercy on me, and take me into Thy kingdom.'" Dr. More adds:—"Though something should fall from him in an enthusiastic hurricane, that seems neither suitable to what he writes elsewhere, nor to some grand theory that all men in their wits

and not to inculcate some which he deems very important; but this, as he judges, is no reason for withholding such portions of their writings as he *does* approve. While the very basis of Christian truth and of *all* religion are being assailed, it were not wise to exclude workmen able and skilful in strengthening "the foundations," only because they are not "master-builders" for repairing and completing the superstructure. Besides which, he that would use no human writings but those entirely free from error, would find no library from which to make his choice.

A collection like the following, although men of the world will find it antiquated, commonplace, or gloomy, should suggest to reflective minds at least this one thought,—how many able men, of different countries, connections, habits, and modes of thinking (those here cited being also a very small section of the whole), have agreed in accounting the great truths of religion, and the doctrines and precepts of Christ, to be of paramount value and

have hitherto allowed for truth; yet it were to be imputed rather to that disease which his natural complexion is obnoxious to, than to any evil *design* of the writer."

supreme importance, precious alike to guide us i
action and to sustain us in suffering.

The vague and hopeless speculations of unbelie
ing or irreligious minds, ought assuredly to ha
no weight with us, as compared with such diver
and combined testimonies to the power of faith.

CHOSEN WORDS.

Why are men not deeply impressed by Proofs from Nature for the being of God?

We ought not to be astonished, if many even subtle and penetrating minds have failed to discover God in their survey and research of nature. The passions which rule them, or the false prejudices which spring from the passions, have closed their eyes to this grand spectacle. A man deeply earnest as to some affair which invites the whole application of his mind, will spend many days in an apartment, engrossed by that concern, without looking at the proportions of the apartment, or the paintings and other decorations which surround him. The objects are constantly in his view, but no one of them makes an impression. Thus men live. All presents God to them, and they see Him nowhere. They pass their lives without having discerned the manifestation of Deity, because the fascination of the world blinds their eyes. Often too they hold them closed, for fear of finding Him whom they

desire not to seek. Moreover, that which should assist to open their eyes, serves but to close them the more; namely, the constancy and regularity of those movements which the supreme Wisdom has ordered in the universe. St. Augustine remarks, "These wonders are made common by continual repetition." Cicero has the same thought: "By seeing them always, the mind is habituated to them as well as the eye. It neither admires nor takes the pains to search into the cause of effects which it sees ever happening in the same manner; as if it were only the novelty and not the greatness of things which should incite us to this inquiry."—FÉNELON.

—o—

Comparisons showing that Nature declares its Author.

WHO will believe that the Iliad, that admirable poem, was not composed by the genius of a great poet; that the characters of the alphabet being confusedly thrown, mere chance [or fate] arranged the letters in the order necessary to describe, in verses full of harmony and variety, so many events, to connect them so well together, to delineate each object and character in the manner

most noble and most affecting? Never certainly could a man possessed of his understanding be persuaded that the Iliad had no other author than chance [or fate].

What man of sense therefore can believe of this universe, doubtless incomparably more wonderful than the Iliad, that which good sense could never permit him to believe of such a poem?—FÉNELON.

——o——

IF any one should find in a desert island, a beautiful marble statue, he would at once say, No doubt men have formerly been here. I recognise the hand of an able sculptor; I admire the talent by which he proportioned every part of this figure so as to give it such beauty, grace, and majesty. What would this discoverer answer if he were told,—No; the statue was formed by no sculptor: it is true that exquisite taste and skill appear in it; but it was formed by chance only. Among the many blocks of marble, this one has thus shaped itself: a violent storm has thrown and fixed it on the pedestal, which chance or fate had also constructed and prepared.—FÉNELON.

——o——

The Redeemer's Dominion.

THE discovery of the invisible world, and the disposal of affairs there, have a most encouraging aspect upon this world. For both the discovery and the disposal are by our blessed Redeemer in whom mercy and might are met in highes perfection. How fragrant breathings of grace how glorious a display of power, are there in what He here says, "Fear not! I am the Firs and the Last. I have the keys of Hades and of Death." He hath opened this celestial Hade to our view, that it might be also open to ou safe entrance and blissful inhabitation. He wh was dead but liveth, and had made His victorious triumphant entrance before us, and for us,—'ti He who bids us lift up our eyes, and behold th heavens opened, and Himself standing at th right hand of God. The horrid infernal Hade He hath discovered too, only that we might fea and shun it. Why doth He here represen Himself under this character,—"He that livet and was dead,"—but that He might put us i mind of that most convictive argument of H love, His submitting to *die* for us? Greate love hath no man—and that He might at onc put us out of doubt concerning His power, tha He yet survives, and is sprung up alive out

that death, victorious over it? How amiable is the representation of such power in conjunction with such love! The same person having a heart so replenished with love, a hand so armed with power, neither capable of unkind design, nor unable to effect the most kind—behold Him in this representation! Who would not now fall at His foot and adore! Who would hesitate at resigning to Him, or be appalled at His disclosure of this unknown world!

Consider Him who makes the discovery; and who would not expect from Him the utmost efforts of love and goodness, from Him who is the Brightness of His Father's glory, and the express Image of His person—His essential Image who is Love—from Him who came into this wretched world of ours full of grace and truth, and who could not have come but by the inducement of compassion for our miseries: from Him who knows all things, and whose eye penetrates into every recess of the vast Hades, all His own empire;—who has told us, in His Father's house are many mansions, and if it were not so, would have told us that.—JOHN HOWE.

—o—

The "Folly" of Atheism.

"THE fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." The word rendered "fool" and its cognate word "folly," are applied in Scripture to persons and acts of gross sin and crime.* The fool, emphatically and wilfully so, is one that has lost his wisdom and right notion of God and Divine things; not one who lacks reason, but who abuses and perverts it. "He has said in his heart," that is, he thinks, or doubts, or wishes. He has doubts whether there be a God or no; he wishes there were none, and sometimes hopes there *is* none. God may be denied, as regards His *being;* or, as to His *inspection* and care of the things of this world; or, in respect to one or other of the *perfections* of His nature. Those who deny God's providence do in effect deny His being, for they deny the exercise of those moral attributes which are the glory of the Deity. No man is exempted from some spice of atheism, arising from the depravity of his nature. A neglect of God, or a misrepresentation of His character, is natural to man as corrupt. Secret or partial atheism is the spring of all wicked

* Gen. xxxiv. 7; Deut. xxii. 21; Jud. xx. 10; Jer. xxix. 23. In this last text, the translators have employed the word "villany."—(*Edit.*)

practice. The existence of God is the sole foundation of all religion and of true morality. Unless we believe that God is, we can pay Him no homage or obedience at all; nor any due and right homage except we believe in His perfections. The defence of this great truth appears more than ever needful in our own age, when men not only have atheism in their hearts, but often avow it with their tongues, teach it by their pens, and insinuate it both ways: the defence of this all-important truth is needed also to repress that secret atheism which is in the heart of man by nature. Though every object presents a Deity to our minds, and exhorts us to subscribe to the truth, yet there is a root of atheism springing up sometimes, in wavering thoughts and vain imaginations, inordinate acts and secret wishes. Nor is it useless for those who effectually believe and love God to review the satisfactory accounts which reason gives of Him they adore and love; to see every creature justify them in their owning of Him and affections to Him.

The first argument of the atheist's folly, is that he denies or doubts of what has been the acknowledged sentiment of all nations, in all places and ages. No people is so untamed, that absolute atheism hath gained a footing. Nor does idolatry

weaken, but confirm this consent. Had not the nations owned the being of a God, they had never offered incense to an idol. The great diversities of such worship further confirm that consent, and evince it not to be a combination to deceive. Every one finds the sense of a Deity in his own climate; yea, in himself. Neither is this all but universal consent prejudiced by a few dissentients. What if some men be blind, shall any conclude thence that sight is not natural to men? Shall a man in a dungeon or cavern who never saw the sun, deny that there is a sun because one or two blind men tell him there is none, while thousands assure him that there is? Is it not then profound folly to dissent from all mankind, and stand in contradiction to human nature? The wickedness of the world would never have preserved that which was a perpetual molestation, had it been possible to be razed out. Again, it is gross folly to deny that which all creatures or things in the world make manifest. The first discourse of the mind upon the sight of a delicate piece of workmanship, is the conclusion of the being of an artificer, and the admiration of his skill and industry. How could this great universe be brought into being, unless a God had framed it? Every plant, every atom, as well as every star, whispers in our ears, I am witness to a Deity. Who ever saw

statues or pictures, but presently thinks of a statuary and limner? Who beholds garments, ships, or houses, but understands there was a weaver, a carpenter, an architect? The world could not make itself. Whatsoever began in time, once was not; and when it was nothing it had nothing and could do nothing. The first man was not; and therefore could not make himself to be; neither his body nor his soul could form itself. Can that which cannot form the least mote, the least grain of dust, form itself, a nobler substance than any upon earth? Without owning a God as the first cause of the world, no man can give a tolerable account of the world to his own reason. And this first cause must *necessarily* exist. Nothing can bring itself into being, therefore there must be a being that depends on no other, never was produced by any other, but was what He is from all eternity. Further, as the production of creatures proves a Creator, so their adaptedness to fulfil particular ends. One thing is fitted for another: the eye for the sun, the sun for the eye. Whether we look at the host of stars, or at the minutest plants and insects of the earth, we discern the same adaptation of means to ends; and the more any department of nature is investigated, the more is this diversified skill and design apparent.

Above all, it is exceeding folly to deny that which a man's *own* nature witnesseth unto him. The body and the soul alike bear the impress of the infinite power and wisdom of the Creator; a body framed with admirable architecture; a soul endowed with wonderful faculties and powers. The fabric of man's body is an argument for a Deity, and ever the more so, in proportion to the depth and exactness of research. If we examine the heart, the brain, the ear, the eye, the tongue, the nerves, or arteries; every member hath a signature and mark of God and of His wisdom.

So likewise, and pre-eminently, the character of the *soul*. We know that we have an understanding, which thinks, reasons, wills, remembers. Consider the vastness of its capacity. It can conceive the universe, and paint in itself the invisible pictures of all things. With one flight of fancy it can ascend to the battlements of heaven. It is capable of apprehending and discoursing of things immensely superior to its own nature. This cannot be the result of any material cause. That which is destitute of reason and will, could never *confer* reason and will. If nature be not intelligent, then it produces in the soul an effect more excellent than itself; inasmuch as an understanding being surpasses a being that hath no understanding. If the supreme cause of the soul

be intelligent, why do we not call it *God?* A spiritual nature cannot proceed but from a spirit, and of a transcendent perfection above itself. A man must be ignorant of himself (of his bodily structure, and of his soul's capabilities), before he can be ignorant of the existence of God.

Further, consider the operations of *conscience.* An inward comfort attends good actions, and an inward pain follows bad ones. There is therefore a sense of some superior Judge who hath the power of rewarding and punishing. Man finds a distinction between good and evil.* If there were no such distinction, no such law, how should men, that are naturally inclined to evil, disapprove of that which is unlovely, and approve of that good which they practice not? Common reason concludes that there is some Power which has fixed this distinction in man. Whence its original? Not from man; he would fain blot it out, but cannot. It is settled by some higher Hand, which maintains it against the violences of men; who else would make the world, more than

* "We do then *blame* ourselves. It is one of the most real and tremendous facts of our consciousness; which if a man seek to explain away—it will yet remain, defying and scorning all his arguments. He knows that he himself did the sin, and no cause back of [antecedent to] himself. It is a fact self-pronounced in his consciousness. Chloroform may rid him of it, but not argument."—HORACE BUSHNELL.—(Edit.)

it is, a field of blood. Hence we are instructed that there is a God. The mind argues,—I find myself naturally under obligation to do this thing and avoid that; there must be something above me therefore, that put this principle into man's nature.—All over the world, conscience hath shot its darts. It hath torn the hearts of princes in the midst of their pleasures; it hath not flattered them whom most men flatter, nor feared to disturb their rest whom no man dares to provoke. There is no surer evidence in nature that there is a God, than that man hath a natural principle in him which continually cites him before God, and puts him in mind of Him, and makes him reflect upon Him whether he will or no. Nor is this truth weakened by the fact, that in some men, and even in some great communities, conscience is "seared" or dimmed, or perverted. Shall it be therefore argued that it is a thing not belonging to man's nature? Who would argue, that because some have lost their reason by a distemper of the brain, therefore reason hath no reality? We can no more say, that, because many walk by a false rule there is no such thing as conscience, than we can say that because men have errors in their minds, they have no such faculty as understanding, or, because many men will what is evil, they have *no* such faculty as a will.

Once again, there is evidence of a God from the vastness of desires in man. He has a boundless appetite for some sovereign good. His soul finds imperfection in everything here. How came it to know that something is wanting to make its nature and condition more perfect, if there were not in it the notion of a perfect Being who can give it rest? Can such a capacity be supposed to be in the soul, without some Being who is able to satisfy it? Man hath objects for his affections, as well as affections for objects. Every member of his body has its end and does attain it; every affection of his soul has its object, and shall there be none for that which comes nearest to infinite of any affection planted in him? That goodness which implanted such a desire in the soul, would not do it to no purpose, and mock it in giving it an infinite desire of satisfaction without intending it the enjoyment, if it doth not by its own folly deprive itself of this.

Since it is utter and criminal folly to deny the being of God, so it must be the only true wisdom, while we acknowledge His being, often to think of Him. He that hath given us the faculties whereby we are able to think, ought assuredly to be the grand object about which thought should be exercised. It is a justice to the Author of our understandings, a justice also to the nature of these, that

the nobest faculties should be employed about the most excellent object. As we seem to deny God's being when we neglect to think of Him, so we seem to *unsoul* our souls, by misemploying their activity. What comfort can be had in the being of God without thinking of Him with reverence and delight? A God forgotten is as no God to us.

CHARNOCK.

—o—

The Friendship of Christ.

SURVEY the great privilege which our Lord vouchsafes to believers, in calling and accounting them His friends. It includes, 1. Freedom of access. House and heart are open for the reception of a friend. The passage is easy, and free from all obstruction, and not only admits, but even invites the comer. How different is the same man from himself as he sustains the person of a magistrate, or that of a friend. As a great officer, he locks himself up from all approaches, by the multiplied formalities of attendance. But when friendship, not business, demands an entrance, those formalities disappear. He offers himself to the visits of a friend with facility, and all the correspondent readiness of desire.

'Tis confessed, that the vast distance which sin

had put between the offending creature and the offended Creator, required the help of some great Umpire and Intercessor, to open him a new way of access to God; and this Christ did for us as Mediator. But we read of no mediator to bring us to Christ. For though, being God by nature, He dwells in the height of majesty and the inaccessible glories of Deity, yet to keep off all strangeness between Himself and the sons of men, He has condescended to a consanguinity with us, that so He might subdue His glories to a possibility of human converse. And therefore he that denies himself an immediate access to Christ, affronts Him in the great relation of a friend; and as opening Himself both to our persons and our wants with the greatest tenderness and freest invitation. 2. This privilege includes a sympathy in joy and grief. See how Christ sustains and makes good this generous quality. He is "a merciful High-priest, touched with the feeling of our infirmities;" and no doubt with the same meltings of affection with which any tender mother hears and bemoans the groanings of her sick child, does Christ hear and sympathize with the spiritual agonies of a soul under desertion, or the pressures of some stinging affliction. He not only knows, but, emphatically, He remembers also, that we are but dust.

Observe that signal passage of His loving consideration. As soon as He had risen from the dead and met Mary Magdalene, He sends the message by her, Go tell my "disciples, and Peter, that I am risen." Why is Peter mentioned particularly and by himself, as if he were exempted out of their number? Why, we know into what a plunge he had newly cast himself by denying his Master; whence he was now struggling with perplexities and horrors of mind, lest Christ might in like manner deny and disown him before His Father. Hereupon Christ particularly applies the comforts of His resurrection to him; as if He had said,—Tell all my disciples, but be sure especially to tell poor Peter, that I am risen from the dead; and that notwithstanding his denial of me, the benefits of my resurrection belong to him, as much as to any of the rest.—This is the privilege of the saints, to have a companion and a supporter in all their miseries, in all the doubtful turnings and doleful passages of their lives. In sum, this happiness does Christ vouchsafe to all His, that as a Saviour He once suffered *for* them, and that as a Friend He always suffers *with* them.—SOUTH.

—o—

Dissuasion from Despair.

He that despairs, limits an infinite Power to a finite apprehension, and measures Providence by his own little contracted model. But the contrivances of Heaven are as much above our politics, as beyond our arithmetic. Of those many millions of casualties which we are not aware of, there is hardly one but God can make an instrument of our deliverance. And most men who are at length delivered from any great distress, find that they are so by ways that they never thought of,—ways above or beside their imagination. Therefore let no man who owns the belief of a Providence, grow desperate or forlorn under any calamity or strait whatever; but compose the anguish of his thoughts and rest his amazed spirits upon this one consideration,—that he comprehends not those strange unaccountable methods by which Providence may dispose of him. And since all interests (notwithstanding all the contrivance and power that human nature can exert about them) remain so wholly contingent as to us, surely all the reason of mankind cannot suggest any solid ground of satisfaction, but in making that God our friend who is the sole and absolute disposer of all these things, and in carrying a conscience so clear towards Him, as may encourage us with confidence

to cast ourselves upon Him, and in all casualties still to promise ourselves the best events from His providence to whom nothing is casual, who constantly wills the truest happiness to those that trust in Him, and works all things according to the counsel of that blessed will.—SOUTH.

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Trust in God through His Gospel Promises.

THE gospel lays a strong foundation of cheerful dependence upon the grace and love of God, and affiance in it. We have the greatest assurance that may be given us, of God's readiness to relieve such forlorn and desolate creatures as we are. We are told of a new and living way to the throne of grace, of a great and mighty Saviour, able to save to the utmost all that come to God by Him; we hear of the most compassionate and tender promises from the Truth itself, that whosoever comes to Him, He will in no wise cast out; the most gracious invitations that heaven can make to all weary and heavy laden sinners, to come to Christ that they may find rest; the great secrets of heaven and arcana of Divine counsels are revealed, whereby we are acquainted that "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, goodwill towards men," are sweetly joined together in

heaven's harmony; that the glory of the Deity and salvation of men are not allayed by their union one with another, but both in the most transcendent way exalted together; that Divine love and bounty are the supreme rulers in heaven and earth, and that there is no such thing as sour despite and envy lodged in the bosom of that ever-blessed Being above, whose name is Love, and all whose dispensations to the sons of men are but the dispreadings and distended radiations of His love; as freely flowing forth from it through the whole orb and sphere of its creation, as the bright light from the sun in the firmament, of whose benign influences we are then only deprived when we hide and withdraw ourselves from them. We are taught that the mild and gentle breathings of the Divine Spirit are moving up and down in the world to produce true life, and quicken the souls of men into a feeling sense of a blessed immortality. This is that mighty Spirit that will, if we comply with it, teach us all things. We can never enough distrust ourselves, nor ever trust too much in God. This is that full confidence which the gospel everywhere seems to promote, offering forcible motives to all ingenuous addresses to God, and confident expectation of all assistance from Him to carry on our poor endeavours to the *achievement of* blessedness. But it is very

strange that where God writes life so plainly in fair capital letters, we are so often apt to read death; that when He tells us over and over, that hell and destruction arise from ourselves, that they are the workmanship of our own hands, we will needs understand their pedigree to be from heaven. No; the gospel tells us we are not come to "the mount that burned," nor unto "blackness and darkness and tempest." Certainly a lively faith in this love of God, and a sober converse with his goodness by a cordial entertainment and thorough persuasion of it, would warm and chafe our benumbed minds, and thaw our hearts frozen with self-love; it would make us by a free and noble sympathy with the Divine love to yield ourselves up to it, and dilate and spread ourselves more fully in it. This would lead us into the true liberty of the sons of God; filling our hearts, once enlarged with the sense of it, with a more generous and universal love, as unlimited and unbounded as true goodness itself is. Thus, Moses-like, conversing with God in the mount, and there beholding His glory shining thus out upon us in the face of Christ, we should be deriving a copy of that eternal Beauty upon our own souls, and our thirsty spirits would be perpetually imbibing a true participation of His glory. A true Divine love would *wing our souls*, and make them take their flight

swiftly towards heaven and immortality. Could we once be thoroughly possessed with a full confidence of the Divine love, and God's readiness to assist such feeble languishing creatures as we are in our essays after heaven and blessedness, we should then, finding ourselves borne up by an eternal and almighty strength, dare to adventure courageously upon the highest designs of happiness, to pursue a course of well-doing without weariness, knowing that in due season we shall reap if we faint not; trusting in God as ready to instil strength and power into all the vital faculties of our souls.

If we suffer not ourselves to be robbed of this confidence and hope in God, as ready to accomplish the desires of those that seek after Him, we may then walk on strongly in the way to heaven—we may run and not faint. And the more the souls of men grow in this blissful persuasion, the more shall they mount up like eagles into a clear heaven, rising higher and higher above all those mists and tempests of a slavish fear, despair, fretfulness against God, or any strugglings to get from within the verge of his power and omnisciency, which would mantle up their souls in black and horrid night.—JOHN SMITH (of Cambridge).*

* Highly eulogized by Bp. Patrick, both for talents and Christian excellence.—(EDIT.)

God's Care for us.

If God cares for us, our concernments are in the best and safest hands—infinitely safer than under any care and conduct of our own. And this ought to be a great satisfaction to our minds, and to free us from disquieting thoughts; for if God undertakes the care of us, we are sure that nothing shall happen to us but by the disposal or permission of infinite wisdom and goodness. Can we wish that we and our concernments should be in better or safer hands? If we be careful to do our duty, and to demean ourselves towards God as we ought, we may rest assured of His love and care of us; and if we do in good earnest believe the providence of God, we cannot but think He will take a peculiar care of their concernments who love and serve Him, and that He can and will dispose them better for us than we could manage them ourselves, if our affairs were put into the hands of our own counsel. Put the case we had the entire ordering and disposal of ourselves, what were reasonable for us to do? We would surely, according to our best judgment, do the best we could for ourselves; and when, upon experience of our own ignorance and weakness, we had found our weightiest affairs frequently to miscarry for want of foresight or

power, or skill to prevent the hazards and disappointments to which human affairs are liable,—then, if we knew any one much wiser and more powerful, who we believed did heartily love us, we would, out of kindness to ourselves, ask His counsel and crave His assistance; and if we could prevail with Him to undertake the care of our concernments, we would commit them to His government in confidence of His great wisdom and good will to us. Now God is such a one. He loves us as well as we do ourselves, and desires our happiness as much, and knows infinitely better than we do what means are most conducing to it, and will most effectually secure it. And every man that believes thus of God—the first thing he would do (if he knew not already that God had of His own accord undertaken the care of him) would be to beseech Him, with all importunity, to be permitted to refer his concernments to Him; and he would, without demur or difficulty, give up himself wholly to Him, to guide and govern him, and to dispose of him as to Him should seem best.

Now if God have prevented us herein, and without our desire taken this care upon Himself, we ought to rejoice in it, as the greatest happiness that could have befallen us; and we should, without farther care and anxiety, using our own

best diligence, and studying to please Him, cheerfully leave ourselves in His hands, with the greatest confidence that He will do all that for us which is really best; and with a firm persuasion, that that condition and those circumstances of life which He shall choose for us, will be no other but the very same which we would choose for ourselves, if we were as wise as He is.—TILLOTSON (ABP.).

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Man's Life, its Object.

WE can never give a rational account why such a creature as man was made, if we confine all our apprehensions concerning him to his present state on earth; but let them once transcend those narrow limits, fly over into eternity, and behold him made for an everlasting state hereafter,—and the difficulty vanishes. For we may now represent the case thus;—that man was put into this terrestrial state and dwelling, by the wise and righteous designation of his Creator and Lord, that his loyalty to Him, amidst the enticements of sensible things, might be tried awhile; that revolting from Him, he is only left to feel here the just smart of his causeless defection; that yet such farther methods are used for his re-

covery, as are most suitable to his so impaired state. An allayed light shines to him in the midst of darkness, that his feebler eye may receive a gradual illumination, and behold God in those more obscure discoveries which he now vouchsafes of Himself, till by degrees he be won to take up good thoughts of Him, and return into an acquaintance and friendship with Him, which once begun here, shall be hereafter perfected in eternal fruitions. His Maker testifies his reconcileableness, and persuades a reconciliation upon such terms and by so endearing mediums as might melt hearts of adamant, and shall effectually prevail with many to yield themselves the subjects and instances of His admired goodness for ever; while others lie only under the natural consequents of their unremedied enmity and folly. So are the glorious issues of God's dispensation towards man worthily celebrated through eternity with just acclamation and praises. Though now we behold a dark cloud of mortality hanging over the human race, though we see the grave still devouring and still unsatisfied, and puzzle ourselves to assign a reason why such a creature was made a reasonable being to visit the world only and vanish, to converse a short space with objects and affairs so far beneath it, and retire we know not whither,—if yet our

eye follow him through the dark paths of t
region of death, till we behold him clothed wi
immortality and fitted to an endless state, t
wonder is over, and our amazement ceas
Surely He that made this great universe, a
disposed all the sorts and motions of creatu
in so exquisite order and method, must be
perfectly wise and intellectual agent, and can
be supposed to have done anything to no p
pose; much less when all the inferior creatu
have ends visibly answering the exigency of th
natures, to have made so excellent a creature
man in vain; that he only should be withc
his proportionable end, and after a short c
tinuance in being, return to nothing, withc
leaving it conjecturable what he was made f
This were so intolerable an incongruity, and
unlike the footsteps that everywhere else app
of the Divine wisdom and goodness, that we c
not but conclude—Man was made for some higl
purposes than are within the reach of our sig
and hath his principal parts yet to act up
another stage, within the vail, that shall nev
be taken down.—JOHN HOWE.

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The World an Inn.

Did we consider this world as becomes us, even as wise men, we may easily find that it neither was intended to be, nor indeed can be, a place of rest, but only a kind of laboratory to fit and prepare the children of men for a better and more abiding state; a little narrow nursery wherein we may be dressed and pruned, till transplanted into a better paradise. The troubles, discomposures, and calamities that attend our lives, their shortness and the continued vexation occurring in them, and finally the universal mortality, are a sufficient instruction that we have no abiding city here. And if we will consider the great wisdom of God, who orders everything in the world to ends proportionable, the excellence of the soul of man, the great advances his nature is capable of, the means which the merciful and wise God hath afforded by His works and by His word to enable him for a nobler life, will easily confess that there is another city to come, which it becomes every man to fit himself for. Yet how many, as if insane, make it their whole business to provide for a rest and happiness in this world, and (which is yet a higher degree of frenzy) to esteem this the only wisdom, and account the careful provision for eternity the folly of a few weak, melancholy, fanciful men;

whereas in due time it will most evidently appear that those who are most sedulous touching their everlasting rest, are the only true wise men, and so shall be acknowledged by all that now despise them.

When I come to my *inn*, this consideration presently occurs to me;—if my lodging be good and fair, the furniture splendid, the attendance great, the provisions good and well-ordered, yet I consider this is not the place of my rest, I must leave it to-morrow. And again, if my inn be but poor, my entertainment mean, my lodging decayed, I do not send for carpenters and painters to repair or beautify it, but I content myself with it, because I consider it will be but for a night and to-morrow I shall be gone. And although this world is little other than our inn to entertain us in our journey to another life, and our longest stay here in comparison of eternity is infinitely more short than a night's lodging in comparison to the longest life here, yet it is wonderful to observe how much we are taken up with the concerns of this our inn, what pains and cost we employ in it, how much of our time is laid out upon it, as if it were our only home. If our lot cast us upon a handsome lodging, furnished with wealth and honour, how we pride ourselves in it! what care we have to make it more rich and

splendid. On the other hand, if our lot cast us on a meaner station, if we are poor, sickly, or neglected, what impatience and unquietness appear. Nay; though our lodging be pretty well, yet if it be not so good as such a neighbour's, what complaining and envy, what plots and underminings; while men never consider, this is not my home, it is but my inn.—SIR MATTHEW HALE.

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Lessons from God's being our Father.

THE consideration that God is our Father obligeth us to be patient in the sorest afflictions, as deeming them to come from a paternal hand, inflicted with great affection and compassion, designed for and tending to our good. The punishments inflicted by men may proceed from passion; but God assuredly never inflicts anything grievous on us, but out of pure good will. And what sweeter consolation can there be than to know that the most cross and distasteful accidents befalling us, do (according to the intention of Him that manageth them) conduce to our profit, and shall in the event, if we patiently receive them, and do not by our untowardness hinder their effect, prove wholesome and advantageous to us.

This consider*ation*, more generally, serves to

cherish our faith, to raise our hope, to quicken our devotion; for whom shall we confide in if not in such a Father? From whom can we expect good if not from Him who hath already given us so much, even all that we have? If in any need, corporal or spiritual, we request succour or supply from Him, can we suspect that such a Father will refuse us or can fail us? Our Saviour says, "How much *more* shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him!" implying that on account of this relation we may in all our spiritual needs be assured of finding requisite assistance and relief. We should therefore, upon all exigencies, address ourselves to God, not with the fear of slaves, nor the suspicion of strangers, but with dispositions of heart suitable to children, with a reverent love and humble confidence. Further, if God be the Father of all things, they are all thence in some sort our brethren, and so may claim from us a fraternal affection and demeanour answerable thereto: shall we then scorn, abuse, trample, or tyrannize over any of them? If we are all branches from one stock, or streams issuing from the same source of Divine beneficence, if we are members of one family, we are surely obliged to a universal benevolence: to be kind and compassionate, helpful and beneficial to all, so far as our capacity reacheth. The meanest

of God's creatures is not to be despised or misused by us, since it is the work of His hands and the object of His kindness. But especially towards those who in a more peculiar and excellent sense are entitled the sons of our Father, we learn hence our respective duties of charity and good will towards each other; which if we do not maintain, we thereby are first undutiful and unkind to God our common Father, and then even to ourselves. We hate and harm both God's relations and our own, by hating or harming any man whatever, especially any good man, any Christian brother, who upon so many better and higher accounts standeth related to God and to ourselves.—BARROW.

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THERE is nothing in the purpose of Jehovah that militates against the salvation of any who hear the gospel.

In the destruction of the wicked the cause is not in God; it is to be wholly sought in the wicked themselves. Exclusion is exclusively the work of man. God excludes none but those who exclude Him and His blessings. The true doctrine of reprobation is this:—the refusal of creatures by God, in consequence of a *prior* refusal—the refusal of God by themselves.—HOWELS.

Improvement of Time.

If time be a thing most precious, as it were a great folly to lavish it unprofitably, so to be frugal of it, and careful to lay it out for the best advantage, especially as every man has so little store thereof, must be a special point of prudence. To be covetous of time (Seneca tells us)* is the only commendable avarice, there being nothing excellent that can soon or easily be effected. Surely he that hath much and great business to dispatch and but little time allowed for it, is concerned not to lose it in idleness, not to trifle it away in unnecessary divertisements, not to put himself upon other impertinent affairs, above all, not to create obstacles to himself by pursuing matters of a tendency contrary to the success of his main undertakings. Such is our case; we have here business of infinite price and consequence to us, no less than the salvation of our souls and eternal happiness; and we see that our time to bring it to a happy issue is very scant and short. We are bound to furnish our minds with needful knowledge of God's will and our duty; we are to bend our unwilling wills to a ready compliance with them; we are to adorn our souls with dispositions suitable to the future state, to restrain

* "Nulla, nisi temporis, honesta est avaritia."

inordinate passions, to extirpate vicious habits: in order to this, to use all fit means, devotion towards God, study of His word, reflection on our acts, with all such spiritual instruments, which, as it requires great care and pains, so it needs much time: all this is not as soon done as said; a few spare minutes will not suffice to accomplish it. No virtue is acquired in an instant, but by degrees, step by step: it is a child of patience, a fruit of perseverance: that "enduring" St. Paul speaks of; it consequently is a work of time. Having therefore so much to do, and so little a portion of time for doing it, it behoves us to be careful in the improvement of what time is allowed us, to embrace all opportunities and advantages, to be not slothful and negligent, but active and intent; not, also, to consume our time in fruitless pastimes and curious entertainments of fancy; not to immerse ourselves in multiplicities of needless care about secular matters, which may distract us and bereave us of fit leisure for our great employment; not to be implicated and entangled (as in a net) with the negociations of this present life, so that we shall not be expedite, or free to bestir ourselves about more weighty affairs. The spending much time about those things, doth steal it from these; yea, doth more than so; by discomposing our minds, so that we cannot *well* employ what time remains *upon our spiritual concernments*.—BARROW.

Patience in Sickness.

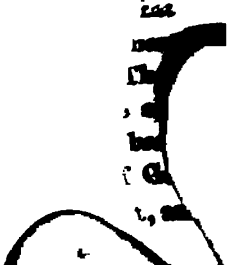
At the first address and presence of sickness, stand still and arrest thy spirit, that it may, without amazement or affright, consider, that this was that thou lookedst for, and wert always certain should happen; and that now thou art to enter into the actions of a new religion, the agony of a strange constitution: but at no hand suffer thy spirits to be dispersed with fear or wildness of thought, but stay their dispersion by a serious consideration of the present and future employment. Every man, when shot with an arrow from God's quiver, must then draw in all the auxiliaries of reason, and know, that then is the time to try his strength, and to reduce the words of his religion into action; and consider, that if he behaves himself weakly and timorously, he suffers never the less of sickness. Let him set his heart firm upon this resolution, "I must bear it inevitably, and I will, by God's grace, bear it nobly."

Bear in thy sickness all along the same thoughts, propositions, and discourses, concerning thy person, thy life and death, thy soul and religion, which thou hadst in the best days of thy health, and when thou didst discourse wisely concerning things spiritual. For it is to be supposed (and if *it be not* yet done, let this rule remind thee of it

and direct thee), that thou hast cast about in thy health, and considered, concerning thy change and the evil day, that thou must be sick and die, that thou must need a comforter, and that it was certain thou shouldst fall into a state in which all the cords of thy anchor should be stretched, and the very rock and foundation of faith should be attempted: and whatsoever fancies may disturb, or whatsoever weaknesses may invade you, yet consider, when you were better able to judge and govern the accidents of your life, you concluded it necessary to trust in God and possess your souls with patience. Think of things, as they think that stand by you, and as you did when you stood by others; that it is a blessed thing to be patient: that a quietness of spirit hath a certain reward; that still there is infinite truth and reality in the promises of the gospel; that still thou art in the care of God, in the condition of a son, and working out thy salvation with labour and pain, with fear and trembling; that now the sun is under a cloud, but it still sends forth the same influence; and be sure to make no new principles upon the stock of a new and impatient sense, or too busy an apprehension: keep your old principles, and upon their stock, discourse and practice on towards your conclusion.—JEREMY TAYLOR (BP.).

Prayer must be Persevering.

We must persevere and be importunate
prayers, by repetition of our desires, ti
give a gracious answer. To this purpose
speaks a parable, that men ought always
and not to faint. "Praying without c
St. Paul calls it, that is, with continual a
frequent interpellations, never ceasing, 1
the request till we obtain our desire.
not enough to recommend our desires to
one hearty prayer, and then forget to
any more: but so long as our needs co
renew and repeat our desires. So mus
always, that is every day and many ti
day according to our occasions and nece
giving over through weariness or disti
renewing our desires by continual suc
devotions. For God's blessings though
infallibly, yet not always speedily, savin
it is a blessing to be delayed [kept w
we may increase our desire and renew
and do acts of confidence and patience
tain and increase the blessing whe
For we do not more desire to be blesse
does to hear us importunate for blessi
weighs every sigh, and treasures eve
records every prayer, and looks throu



prayer be very long, he that shall blame it for its length must proclaim his disrelish both of reason and religion, his despite of necessity, and contempt of zeal.—JEREMY TAYLOR (BP.).

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God the Chiefest Good.

THE heavenly rest contains as its principal part, our nearest fruition of God the chiefest good. But if to the beloved disciple who was filled with Christ's revelations, it did "not yet appear what we shall be," no wonder if I know little. When I know so little of God, I cannot know much what it is to enjoy Him. When it is so little I know of my own soul while it is here in this tabernacle, how little must I needs know of the infinite Majesty, or of the state of this soul when it is advanced to that enjoyment! If I know so little of spirits, how little of the Father of spirits! Nay; if I never saw that creature which contains not something unsearchable, that insect so small which afforded not matter for questions to puzzle the greatest philosopher, no wonder if mine eye fail when I would look at God, my tongue fail in speaking of Him, and my heart in conceiving. We shall never be capable of clearly knowing, till we are capable of fully enjoying; nay, nor till we

do actually enjoy Him. What strange conceptions hath a man, born blind, of the sun and its light. So do we yet want that sense by which God must be clearly known. I look upon a heap of ants, and see them all with one view. They know not me, my being, nature, or thoughts, though I am their fellow-creature. How little then must we know of the great Creator, though He with one view continually beholds us all! Yet a glimpse the saints behold, though but as in a glass, which makes us capable of some poor, dark, general apprehension of what we shall behold in glory.

As all good whatsoever is comprised in God, and all things in the creature are but drops of this ocean, so all the glory of the blessed is comprised in their enjoyment of God, and if there be mediate joys there, they are but drops from this. If men and angels should study to speak the blessedness of that estate in one word, what can they say beyond this, that it is the nearest enjoyment of God? I would not for all the world that verse had been left out of the Bible, "Father, I will that those whom Thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which Thou hast given me." Every word is full of life and joy. What irreverent presumption had it been, to have thought or spoken of such things if God had not spoken them! But hath *He* said it, and

shall it not come to pass? Yes, as truly as God is true, thus it shall be done to them whom Christ delights to honour.—BAXTER.

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Christian Love to be Cultivated.

LET us express this sweet harmonious affection (of love or charity) in these jarring times, that so, if it be possible, we may tune the world into better music. Especially in matters of religion, let us strive with all meekness to instruct and convince one another. Let us endeavour to promote the gospel of peace, the dove-like gospel, with a dove-like spirit. This was the way by which it at first was propagated in the world: Christ did not cry, nor lift up His voice in the streets—yet He brought forth judgment unto victory. He whispered the gospel to us from Mount Sion in a still voice; and yet the sound thereof went out quickly throughout all the earth. It came down upon the world gently and softly like the dew upon Gideon's fleece; and yet it quickly soaked quite through it; and doubtless this is still the most effectual way to promote it farther. Sweetness and ingenuousness will more command men's minds than passion, sourness, and severity. Let us follow *truth* in love, and of the two, be contented rather

to miss of the conveying of a speculative truth, than to part with love. When we would convince men of any error by the strength of truth, let us withal pour the sweet balm of love upon their heads. Truth and love are two the most powerful things in the world: and when they both go together, they cannot easily be withstood. The golden beams of truth and the silken cords of love, twisted together, will draw men on with a sweet violence, whether they will or no. Let us take heed we do not sometimes call that zeal for God and His gospel, which is nothing else but our own tempestuous and stormy passion. True zeal is a heavenly and gentle flame, which maketh us active for God, but always within the sphere of love. It never calls for fire from heaven to consume those that differ a little from us in their apprehensions.

Let this soft and silken knot of love tie our hearts together; though our heads and apprehensions cannot meet, as indeed they never will, but always stand at some distance from each other. Our zeal, if it be heavenly, will not delight to tarry here below, burning up stubble and sending up nothing but earthy fumes to heaven, but will return pure as it came down, and ever striving to carry up men's hearts to God along with it. It will be only occupied in promoting things unques-

tionably good, and when it moves in the irascible way, it will quarrel with nothing but sin.

CUDWORTH.

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Usefulness should be Mutual.

EVERY man has received some gift; no man all gifts; and this rightly considered, would keep all in a more even temper. As, in nature, nothing is altogether useless, so nothing is self-sufficient: this duly considered, would keep the meanest from repining, even him that hath the lowest rank in most respects: something he has yet received, that is not only a good to himself, but, rightly improved, may be so to others. This will curb the loftiness of the most advanced, and teach them not only to see some deficiencies in themselves, and some gifts in far meaner persons, which they want, but besides the discovery of this, it will put them upon the use of what is in lower persons; not only to stoop to the acknowledgment, but to the participation and benefit of it; not to trample upon all that is below them, but to take up, and use, things useful, though lying at their feet. Some flowers and herbs that grow very low, are of a very fragrant smell and healthful use. Thou that carriest it so high, losest much by it. Many poor Christ-

ians whom thou despisest to make use of, may have that in them which might be very useful for thee, though thou overlookest it. Sometimes a very mean illiterate Christian may speak more profitably and comfortably even to a knowing learned man, than multitudes of his own best thoughts can do; especially in a time of weakness and darkness. All is received to minister to each other; and mutual benefit is the true use of all. Thou art not proprietary lord of anything thou hast, but a steward; and therefore oughtest gladly to be a good steward; that is, both faithful and prudent in thy intrusted gifts, using all thou hast to the good of the household, and so to the advantage of thy Lord. Hast thou abilities of estate, or body, or mind? Let all be thus employed. Thinkest thou that thy wealth or power or wit is thine, to do with them as thou wilt, to engross to thyself, either to retain useless or to use, to hoard and wrap up, or to lavish away, according as thy humour leads thee? No; all is given, as to a steward, wisely and faithfully to lay up and lay out. Not only thy outward and common gifts of mind, but even saving grace, which seems most appropriated for thy private good, yet is not wholly for that; even thy graces are for the good of thy brethren.—LEIGHTON (ABP.).

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The Apostles not Deceivers.

If Jesus was an impostor, how should His disciples, not being ignorant of this, but themselves implicated in the same crime, have endured all sufferings from their countrymen, submitting voluntarily to every kind of punishment for their testimony to Him? This would be totally repugnant to the nature of wicked men. Besides, if they were impostors, they were also unlearned and quite obscure, knowing only the Syriac language. How then did they make their way through the world, how venture on the attempt, and by what power succeed in spreading this faith through the Roman empire? These things I cannot ascribe to the power of man, still less of poor and unknown men, least of all to deceivers and jugglers. Could those who had found their Teacher wicked and deceitful, and had witnessed His merited death, themselves form a compact to deceive and lie as He had done? and what would be its tenour? Would they say, Friends, we of all men best know what our Master was, as a deceiver and teacher of deceit, and that He bore the extreme penalty of these offences. Therefore let us join hands and pledge ourselves to carry on the same imposture, and declare that we saw His miracles, though we saw none. Let us testify without shame that He returned to life,

onversed with us, and partook our repasts. Let
s persist in this impudence of falsehood, even to
eath, for what absurdity is there in dying for
othing? and why should it grieve us to bear
ourges or imprisonments with no rational motive,
r the sake of a falsehood? Let us therefore all
gree thus to lie, without any profit either to our-
lves or the deceived. Let us hold to this lie,
ot only at home, but through Greece and in
ome and Egypt, and this with the full prospect
partaking the doom of our Teacher. For what
ore beautiful than without any reason to make
urselves enemies of gods and men; gaining
ereby neither pleasures, riches, nor any good
ope, but propagating falsehood all in vain. Do
ese things appear credible? even that deceitful
nd selfish men should be willing to meet con-
mpt and torture and death for the sake of a
nown deceiver, and in support of a profitless
eception?—EUSEBIUS.

—o—

The Spiritual Weakness of Man.

ET us not look for any strength in the nature of
an. On what side soever we take a view of him,
e shall find, in himself, nothing but weakness. We
ught to seek for strength only in God, and the

power of His grace. It is He alone can enlighten man's darkness, strengthen his will, sustain his life as long as He pleases, and at last change all the infirmities of his body and soul into a state of eternal glory and stability. All that hath been said of man's weakness, serves only to magnify the power of that grace which upholds him. For what force must it have to enable a creature so corrupt, so feeble, so miserable, to conquer himself and Satan; to raise him above all transitory things, and make him triumph over the world, and all that is deceitful, bewitching, or terrible in it!

But if it be true that nothing more discovers the power of grace than the weakness of man, we may also say that nothing shows the weakness of man so much as the grace of God and those aids which He gives him; and that the infirmities of nature are in some respects more visible in those whom God hath most favoured with His grace. It is not so strange that those who are surrounded with darkness, and who know neither what they are, nor what they are about, who follow nothing but the impressions of their senses, and the whimsies of their own imaginations, should prove inconstant, light, and weak, in the conduct of themselves. But who would not believe, that those whom God hath enlightened from above, to whom

He hath discovered the happiness or misery to which they are going, who have their minds filled with those astonishing objects, hell, heaven, angels, demons, the Son of God Himself a ransom,—who have not only entertained the belief of these things, but have had them sink deep into their hearts, who have preferred God to all things on earth, knowing well that they are all but vain, empty nothing,—who would not think that such as these should be utterly incapable of being moved by any of the trifles of this world? Nevertheless, it is otherwise with them. Their hearts cease not to be still very sensible of the smallest matters. An ill look, an uncivil word, puts them out of order. They sometimes yield under the slightest temptation, at the same time that God hath given them the grace to surmount the greatest. They still find themselves liable to a thousand passions—to a thousand unreasonable thoughts and irregular motions. The follies of the world get entrance and disturb them in their most serious meditations. If they fall not directly into great crimes, they feel in themselves a bias and tendency that way; and they perceive that they have not any strength, of their own, to hinder themselves from falling down that precipice, to which their natural inclination, if God should leave them to themselves, would certainly carry them.

So then, they are these properly, who are sensible of their own poverty. The men of the world are poor and feeble, without perceiving it. A man while he lies on the ground, may not feel his inability to stand. It is by setting ourselves to stem a torrent, which is carrying us away, that we come to know the force of it. There are none then but good men that can well know their own weakness, because they alone do their endeavours to master it. And though they do really get the better of it in occasions of most importance, it is yet with so much imperfection, so many failings, and they have before their eyes so many other cases wherein they may falter, that they find no reason but to be the more convinced of their insufficiency. It is not only then those who are most in the dark, the most imperfect, and those who pass under the name of weak, who ought to say to God, Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak; but even the strongest and most perfect, those who have received from Him the greatest assistance of light and grace. For the proper effect of that light is, to make greater discoveries, and give them a greater sense of their meanness and misery; to make them acknowledge before God that there is nothing but darkness in their understandings, weakness and inconstancy in their wills; and that their life is but a shadow that passes, a vapour

that vanisheth away. This light makes them cry out with the prophet, "My age is as nothing before Thee." And, taking from them all confidence in their own unassisted strength, making them vile and nothing in their own eyes, fills them, at the same time, with admiration of the almighty power of God, and the unfathomable depths of His wisdom, makes them also throw themselves into His arms with a humble confidence, and acknowledgment that He alone is able to support them amidst so many infirmities, so much weakness; that He alone can deliver them from so many evils, and give them victory over so many enemies; and finally that it is in Him alone they find that light, health, and strength which are not to be found either in themselves or any of the creatures about them.—NICOLE.

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Support in Afflictions.

IN conjunction with the belief of God's providence, our belief of His promises—that His truth is unchangeable for the performance of them—is quite requisite to preserve the afflicted spirit in a calm submissive state. To support us in great troubles, this firm affiance in the Divine promises as belonging to us, is of infinite moment. The general

apprehension of God's mercy is ineffectual to support us, and to claim a title in Him without a real evidence is vain. But a regular trust, an applicative faith, in conjunction with our sincere performing the conditions of the promises, are to a Christian, like the sacred locks of Samson's hair: while they remained, he was invincible; but when cut off, he became weak as other men. Our comforts rise and fall according to the stronger or weaker degrees of our faith: Peter walked firmly upon the waves till he doubted; but then he began to sink. One of the sorest and most dangerous temptations of the afflicted is, that they are out of God's favour. The mourning veil darkens the eyes of their minds, that they cannot see His compassionate countenance, cannot reconcile His gracious promises with His providential dispensations, the good things He hath prepared for our hereafter with the evil He sends here. The spirit of darkness takes the advantage of great troubles, to tempt sad souls to despondency, as if they were utterly forsaken of God. St. Austin, to repel this temptation, introduceth God answering the afflicted thus—Is this thy faith? Did I promise thee temporal prosperity? Wast thou made a Christian for this? The faith of our adoption should be confirmed rather than weakened by Divine corrections.

The prayers of the afflicted must be always with submissive deference to the will and wisdom of God, as to the manner, degrees, and time of His delivering them. We are apt to be impatient in our troubles, and by hasty impetuous desires of ease and deliverance, to offend God. We impatiently renew our request, Lord, how long? Lord, make haste—not reposing ourselves on His wisdom and goodness who will do what is best for us. Let us be more intent and importunate in our petitions that our afflictions may be sanctified, than that they be removed.—BATES (DR.).

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Privation, Spiritual, how to be Borne.

IT is to be counted as spiritual self-seeking when a man with eager desire strives after warmth and sensible devoutness, to the end that he may always be in a state of contentment. When such an one has none of these sweet emotions, he is quite troubled, and becomes peevish and very impatient in the mishaps that befall him, though they are really of no importance; and when he cannot enjoy or obtain inward peace according to his desire, he complains of the great grievances and temptations which he has to endure. St. Bernard

says, that our Lord bestows these graces of sensible emotion upon such as have done nothing to deserve them, nor are worthy of them, but He does this in mercy that He may draw such to His love; and He withholds these gifts from some who have undergone long and painful exercises, and were well fit to receive them; yea, from some He withholds them all their life long, but He will give them a great recompense in the life to come. The reason of His thus withholding sensible delight is, that our spiritual fruitfulness and highest blessedness do not lie therein; but in our inward trusting and clinging to God, in our not seeking ourselves in sorrow or in joy, but through joy and sorrow devoting ourselves to God, and like poor unworthy servants offering ourselves to Him at our own costs, though we should have to serve Him thus always. Who has ever been so poor as He who, in utter poorness of spirit, stood forsaken by Heaven and by the creatures, cast out alone in utter exile when He sent forth that bitter cry, "My God, my God, why hast *Thou* forsaken me?" And this was that He might be an ensample to us, to comfort our poverty and bereavement by teaching us true submission. I hear thee saying, "Yes; if it were not my own fault, if I had not failed to receive the blessing through my own heedlessness, *or thrown* it away by my own guilty folly, I could

it—but now it is all my own doing. I have
ght the mischief upon myself." Let not this
thee astray. Dost thou not know that it is
en—"The just man falleth seven times and
1 up again;" and dost thou think to stand
ys? Yes; I assert and confess with thee that
hast brought it upon thyself: nevertheless, it
tter that thou shouldst with firm trust pray
kind Lord for His grace (who knows Thy
ness and is ready to forgive) than that thou
ldst thus drive thyself back in thy course with
faintheartedness. O child, hast thou fallen?
, and go, with childlike trust, to thy Father,
the prodigal son, and humbly say, with heart
nouth, "Father, I have sinned against Heaven,
before Thee, and am no more worthy to be
d Thy Son; make me as one of Thy hired
nts." And what will thy heavenly Father
ut what that father did in the parable? As-
lly He will not change His essence, which is
on account of thy misdoings.

it not His own precious treasure, and a small
with Him to forgive thee thy trespasses, if
believe in Him? For His hand is not
tened that He cannot make thee fit to be
d. Therefore beware of spiritual covetous-
; for the poorer thou art in thine own eyes
1 thou comest to Him, the more acceptable

art thou in His sight, and the more richly will He endow thee and clothe thee out of His treasures.—TAULER.

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Spiritual Conflict.

ALTHOUGH then thou seest thyself the most witless and weak, and findest thyself nothing but a prey to the powers of darkness, yet know, that by believing, the wisdom and strength of Christ are thine. Thou art, and oughtest to find thyself, all weakness, but He is all strength, almightiness itself. Learn to apply His victory, and so it is thine. Be strong, how? In Him and in the power of His might. But thou wilt say, I am often foiled: yea I cannot find that I prevail at all against my enemies, but they still against me;—yet rely on Him. He can turn the chase in an instant; still cleave to Him when the whole powers of thy soul are, as it were, scattered and routed. Rally them by believing. Draw thou but unto the standard of Jesus Christ, and the day shall be thine; for victory follows that standard and cannot be severed from it. Yea, though thou find the smart of divers strokes, yet think that often a wounded soldier hath won the day; *believe*, and it shall be so with thee. Remember

t thy foils, through the wisdom and love of thy l, may be ordered to advance the victory, to able thee, and drive thee from thine own gined strength to make use of His real strength. l be not hasty. Think not at the very first to quer. Many a hard conflict must thou resolve n, and often be brought very low, almost to a perate point, that to thy sense it is past re- ery. Then it is His time to step in, even in midst of their prevailing.—LEIGHTON (ABP.).

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Self-surrender in Distress.

IEN you look around and behold yourself tched, faint, desperate in every point, and t up on all sides, either a violent feeling of ontent and irritation is excited, or else of found dejection and melancholy, both of which most injurious and painful. It also sometimes pens, that all your sorrow and suffering, with its vexations and apparently dangerous con- itants, its intolerableness and wearisomeness, es itself in the most lively manner before your s, by which your distress increases to the hest pitch, so that it seems no longer support- . This is something which proceeds from the d, for which reason the soul ought to be

passive under it, for when suffering is thus at its greatest height, and the soul is driven to extremity, even then the most thorough and magnanimous surrender of ourselves may be exercised; namely, when the soul in the deepest resignation sinks into death, and gives itself up eternally to the unlimited good pleasure of God, which is the very way to obtain rest.—TERSTEEGEN.

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Succour in Trouble.

WE are subject to discouragements in sufferings, by reason of our impatience. "Alas, I shall never get through such an affliction!" But if God bring us into it, He will be with us in it, and at length bring us out more refined. We shall lose nothing but dross (Zech. xiii. 9). Of our own strength we cannot bear the least trouble, and by the Spirit's assistance we can bear the greatest. The Spirit will join His strength to help us to bear our infirmities. The Lord will put His hand to lift us up. "You have heard of the patience of Job," saith St. James. We have heard likewise of his impatience too; but it pleased God mercifully to overlook that. This yields comfort in desolate conditions, as contagious sicknesses and the like, wherein we are more

immediately under God's hand. Then Christ hath a throne of mercy at our bedside, and numbers our tears and our groans.—SIBBES.

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Consolation in Distressing Bereavements.

How short-sighted and deceptive are our views! We are distressed and alarmed to see a person dying in the bloom of youth. But for whom is the loss? What does the departing Christian lose? Some years of vanity, illusion, and danger. God takes His servant from the midst of iniquities, from a very corrupt world, and from a state of great frailty. What do they lose who loved the departed? They lose, perhaps, forgetfulness of God and of themselves; or rather they gain, by this painful cross, the blessedness of detachment from the world. How true is it that God is good, that He smites in tenderness, that He compassionates our real evils, even when He appears to crush us, and when we are tempted to complain of His severity! Soon that which is parted will be reunited, and no trace will remain of the brief separation. He who is setting out on a journey must not think himself far off from those who only two days preceded him. Life glides away like a swift torrent. The past is become but as a dream. The

present, in the moment when we seem to possess it, is escaping, and sinks into the abyss of the past. The future will not be different, but will pass as rapidly. Days, months, and years hasten on, as waves press each other forward. Yet a few moments, yet a little while, and this short life will terminate: that which appears long to us in its days of weariness or sadness, will seem brief indeed when it has past away.

FÉNELON.

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Evils of Controversies.

IF we would live peaceably, it concerns us to abstain from needless contests about matters of opinion, and questions either merely vain and frivolous, of little use or concernment, or over nice and subtle, and thence indeterminable by reason, or that are agitated with extraordinary eagerness and heat of passion. There are some controversies prickly like brambles, and apt to scratch those that handle them, but yielding no savoury or wholesome fruit; such as concern the consequences of imaginary suppositions, the state and circumstances of beings to us unknown, the right application of artificial terms, and the like impertinent matters, which serve no other purpose but the

exercise of curious wits, and exciting of emulation among them. Others there be concerning matters of more weighty moment, yet having the resolution depending upon secrets unsearchable, or the interpretation of ambiguous words and obscure phrases, or upon some other uncertain conjectures; and are yet rendered more difficult by being entangled with inextricable folds of subtlety, nice distinctions and crafty evasions, devised by the parties engaged in them for the maintenance of their causes respectively, whence it hath happened, though with immense care and diligence of both parts they have been long canvassed, that yet they do, and in all probability will for ever, remain undecided. So that now to engage in contest about them, may be reasonably deemed nothing more than a wilful mispense of our time, labour, and good humour, by vainly reciprocating the saw of endless contention. Other questions there be of more easy resolution and of considerable importance, which yet by extreme opposition of parties are so clouded and overgrown with insuperable prejudices, that the disputing of them is seldom attended with other success, than an inflaming ourselves and others with passion. Others are by small and obscure parties managed against the common consent. To countenance new and uncouth paradoxes, as it argues too much arrogance

and presumption in confronting our single apprehensions against the deliberate sense and suffrage of so many men, yea so many ages of men, and is likely to prove a successless attempt, like swimming against the current, accompanied with much toil and little progress, so it serves no good end, but only foments divisions, and disturbs both our private and the public peace.

It concerns us therefore, if we would live peaceably in such disputable matters, to enjoy the results of a serious and impartial disquisition, patiently enduring others to dissent from us, and not attempting by needless, fruitless, and endless contention to gain others to our persuasions.

BARROW.

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Marriage.

THE marriage union was intended by God to refine and spiritualize the human feelings, and to prepare both husband and wife for a glorious hereafter; when the affection begun below shall be purified from all earthly alloy, divested of every terrestrial adhesion, and perfected for ever in the friendship of God Himself. Unnecessary connection with the wicked is forbidden by God even for a moment; how much more then *for life!* How many are now smarting beneath the consequences of being united to one who is irreligious!—HOWELS.

)espair of Pardon affronts Christ's Redemption.

F God spared not His own Son, but delivered Iim for us, to the suffering of so contumelious ffliction, how can we any ways be diffident of His ounty or despair of His mercy: how (as the postle argues) shall He not also with Him freely ive us all things? If ever we be tempted to loubt God's goodness, will not this experiment hereof convince and satisfy us? For what higher indness could God express, what lower condecension could He vouchsafe, by what pledge could Ie more clearly or surely testify His willingness nd His delight to do us good, than by thus sendng His dearest Son to undergo such miseries for s? If the greatness of our sins discourageth us rom entertaining comfortable hopes of mercy, ill it not rear our hearts to consider that such a unishment hath been inflicted to expiate them hich might content the most rigorous severity; hat such a price is laid down to redeem us from he curse which richly may suffice to discharge it; hat such a sacrifice hath been offered which God ath avowed for most available and acceptable to Iimself? So that now what can justice exact ore from us? what have we further to do, than ith a penitent and thankful heart to embrace the ercy purchased for us? Who is he that con-

demneth, seeing Christ hath died, and hath His own self borne our sins in His own body on the tree? Whatever the wounds of our conscience be, is not the blood of the Cross, tempered with our hearty repentance and applied by a lively faith, a sovereign balsam of virtue sufficient to cure them; and may we not by His stripes be healed? Have we not abundant reason, with the holy apostle, to joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement? Is it not to depreciate the worth, to disparage the efficacy, of our Lord's passion, any ways to despair of mercy, or to be disconsolate for guilt, as if the Cross were not enough worthy to compensate for our unworthiness, or our Saviour's patience could not balance our disobedience?

Rather let it yield great joy and sprightly consolation, to contemplate our Lord upon the cross, exercising His immense charity towards us, transacting all the work of our redemption, defeating all the enemies and annulling all the obstacles of our salvation—stretching forth His arms of kindness, with them to embrace the world.—BARROW.

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Disputation generally to be Shunned.

AVOID frequent disputes about lesser truths, and a religion that lies only in opinions. They are usually least acquainted with a heavenly life, who are violent disputers about the circumstantials of religion. He whose religion is all in his opinions, will be most frequently and zealously speaking of these; and he whose religion lies in the knowledge and love of God and Christ, will be more delightfully speaking of that happy time when he shall enjoy them. He is a rare and precious Christian, who is skilful to improve well-known truths. Therefore, let me advise you who aspire after a heavenly life, not to spend too much of your time, your thoughts, your zeal, or your speech upon disputes which less concern your souls; but when hypocrites are feeding on husks and shells, do you feed on the joys above. I wish you were able to defend every truth of God, and to this end would read and study; but still I would have the chief truths to be chiefly studied, and none to cast out your thoughts of eternity. The least controverted points are usually most weighty, and of most necessary frequent use to our souls.—BAXTER.

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Meditation on Heaven.

Use often to set yourself purposely at seasonable hours (as you may be able) to meditate on the heavenly glory, and though we must form no image in our minds of God Himself, but think of Him as an infinite Spirit—yet we may and must think by the help of imagination, of the glorified human nature of Christ, and the glorious state of heaven itself. As, intuitively, we here know our own souls, our vitality, understanding, and will, so, by knowing ourselves, we may know in part what God and angels and holy souls are. As our bodies shall be glorified, so we may have answerable apprehensions of them, and where we may not think of imagined glories (as of the light of the sun or shining bodies) as if the glory of spirits were just the same, yet we may think of them as resemblances or similitudes. So the New Jerusalem is described. (Rev. xxi., xxii.) And from the sense and thoughts of the delights of man on earth, we may aggravate the inconceivable joys of heaven. Set therefore oft before your eyes, the certainty, the nearness, the greatness of that glory; think how many millions of holy souls are there in joy, while we are here in fears and cares; think of the excellent servants of God who have passed thither through a world

of trials, and were lately compassed with such infirmities as ours, and encountered death, as we must do; remember that we go not an untrodden path, but are followers of all the spirits of the just: think how much better it is with them than with us. Think what it is for a perfected soul to see the glorified Redeemer, and all the holy company of saints and angels; yea, to see the glory of God Himself, and have the knowledge of His glorious works; to feel His love poured out unto us, and to be wrapt up in loving and praising Him for ever, in the most transcendent joy and pleasure of the soul. Think of your holy acquaintance that are gone before you; and frequently walk, as it were, in the streets of the city of God. Suppose that you saw their glory, and heard their concordant praises of their Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. Let this kind of thoughts be so oft and earnest, that they may be your daily work and pleasure, the daily conversation of your minds with God above.

BAXTER.

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Spiritual Character is to be Perpetuated Hereafter.

WHILE those hopes of a life to come which the purest philosophy had cherished, are raised into

assurance by the strong and complex testimonies of revelation, the strict moral relation between that life and the present, is also by the same revelation distinctly unfolded. It uniformly represents this life as a season of preparation and tuition for eternity; and with such a view of it the analogies of nature accord. In the corporeal world, each organized body advances by settled laws and gradations to its destined maturity. This naturally leads us to the thought that every spirit has not merely a general but individual destination, which it can only by one path and process attain; and He who alone perfectly knows our spirits, and pervades the eternity on which they are about to enter, can alone assure us,—thus shall ye be perfected — thus or thus shall ye become happy or unblest. So has He spoken to us by His Beloved Son, and we must credit and obey the voice, if we would attain that perfection which is proposed as "the prize of our high calling." Faith in the promises and directions of that word is the great principle and instrument of future felicity. But that word abundantly declares the fixed connection between the present and the future life, insomuch that what we view as most positive in futurity, is stated as the natural result of the moral character *in this* world. "Blessed are the dead which die

in the Lord, for their works do follow them." "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." These and other scriptural representations leave no room to doubt, that the inmost condition of the soul in a future and eternal life will be a natural immediate consequence of its moral state in the present. It is indeed and ever will be true, that all present and future good is a fruit of God's favour or sovereign grace; but it does not hence follow that the Divine procedure is ever arbitrary, irregular, or groundless. Both in God's works and in His word, we find the marks and pledges of universal order and proportion. We have no reason to expect that one who only in the closing days of life embraces the doctrine of Divine truth, will be capable of a like exalted degree of happiness with him who embraced it early, and has long adorned it. Grace is a free and sovereign gift; but the measure of felicity will be proportioned to the fidelity and diligence with which it is improved, and with which accessions of the same holy gift are invited and implored. To be persuaded of these exact and especial relations between our present moral dispositions and the future state of the soul, is of great practical moment. I believe that between these there is a pre-established immutable accordance, and that even positive re-

wards and punishments in futurity, will be not only in the highest sense appropriate, but also natural results of those laws by which the spiritual and material worlds are governed; a thought which contains in it the strongest and most solemn incitement to the best possible use of present gifts and faculties, according to the rule of Him who looks through eternity, and sees at a glance the whole capacity of our being.

LAVATER (*Aussichten*).

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Humility Taught by Man's Weakness.

IT is only when we lose sight of the infinite attributes of the Almighty, that we seem something in our own eyes. Even that power which man ascribes to himself in his own little world is but weakness, and his vanity in all respects ill founded. What is this life upon which he establishes himself? and what power hath he to preserve it? It depends on an engine so nice, and made up of so many curious contrivances, that instead of wondering how it decays, we have reason to admire how it lasts but a moment. The least vessel ruptured, or the smallest passage obstructed, hindering the course of the blood and humours, is enough to ruin the whole economy. A little effusion of blood

upon the brain serves to intercept the communication of spirits and deprive us of motion. If we saw how little a thing puts an end to our lives, we should stand amazed at it. 'Tis no more sometimes than a small drop of a disagreeing liquor, a little grain of matter in a wrong place. And yet this drop, this grain, is sufficient to overturn the mighty designs of the greatest conquerors, the masters of the world—to lay them flat in the dust, and, in respect of other men, reduce them to nothing. What can be found more uncertain, more perishable, than the life of man? A machine or toy elaborately wrought, kept with care, may be preserved for ages; but there is no caution able to preserve our lives—no means to be used that can hinder them from coming in a short time to an end.—NICOLE.

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Estimate of the World by its Votaries.

CONSIDER the judgment, even of worldly men, in their last and serious hours, when the prospect of eternal things is near. How vastly different are their apprehensions of things temporal in the review, from what they were in the period of worldly desires! When there are but few remaining sands in the glass of time, and death shakes the

glass before them, how powerfully do they often preach of the emptiness and uncertainty of things below, and sigh out in Solomon's phrase, All is vanity! And this is more singularly observable in those who have had the fullest enjoyment of earthly things. How do they complain of the vain world and their vainer hearts, when experience has convinced them of their woeful folly! Solomon, who was among other princes as the sun amidst the planets that obscures them by his illustrious brightness,—he that had surveyed this continent of vanity to make experiment whether satisfaction could be found in it,—at last sadly declares that all things here below are but several kinds and ranks of vanities, as ineffectual to make men happy, as counterfeit jewels of several colours are to enrich their possessor. Nay, they are not only vanity but vexation; an empty show that has nothing real except the vexation of disappointment. And shall we not value the judgment of men when they are best instructed, and give credit to their testimony when they are become sincere? Certainly in their approaches to the Divine judgment they are most considerate and serious; they have the truest and justest thoughts of things, and often most freely declare them. Oh the astonishing folly of men, who will not be convinced of the error of their ways till they come to the end of them, and

ə sun is set, and no time remains for their re-
rning into the way of life!—BATES (DR.).

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Cautions for Preserving Truthfulness.

we would preserve veracity, we must accustom
rselves to a sober, modest way of speaking, and
oid those methods which border upon falsehood.
ıme persons affect to be certain of everything
ey speak, and pronounce all that they say with
ə highest assurance. They are never in the wrong:
ver doubtful whether they are in the right or
. If they are declaring their own sentiments of
ə most difficult subject, it is always as clear to
em as the light; they are always as positive as
it were Divinely revealed, and written in the
ɔst express words of Scripture. Another sort of
lkers, when they discourse of common things,
ə ever expressing them in exalted and superla-
'e language. If they speak of anything small, it
prodigiously small; if of anything great, it is
ɔomparably so. If they name a man of wisdom,
is the wisest of all men; or a woman of piety,
ə is the greatest saint in the nation. If they
ar a good sermon, the preacher was inspired,
t an angel could exceed him; if it was a mean
ɜcourse, the wretch had not a grain of sense or

learning. Every opinion they hold is Divine and fundamental. All their own sentiments, even in lesser matters, are the very sense of Christ and His apostles, and all that oppose them are guilty of heresy or nonsense.

Persons who have accustomed their tongues to this language, want the caution which religion requires, and make far too free with truth. Either their thoughts are very injudicious, if they believe what they say, or if they do not believe it, they should make their words agree better with their thoughts.

Besides the approaches to falsehood in this manner of conversation, there is something in it ridiculous. Such an extravagant talker is like a man who walks upon stilts through the open street, or like one who wears a coat much longer than his neighbours. How tall soever they may think themselves, the world will be ready to deride them.—WATTS (DR.).

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Small Duties and Small Sins.

SMALL duties compensate by their repetition for what is wanting in their importance. We are not called daily to make great sacrifices. We are seldom required to set up the standard of the Cross

in barbarous climes, to dare executioners, to triumph in sufferings. Rarely are we called to the great actions that make heroes; to die for our neighbours; to devote ourselves for our country.

Thanks be to God, we are also seldom tempted to commit great crimes: to betray a trust, to make a sale of justice, or to persecute innocence. But in what moment of each day do we not meet with occasions to commit little sins, and to perform duties comparatively small? Are we confined at home? We have little inconveniences to suffer, little perverse humours to bear with, little provocations to impatience to resist, little disgusts to endure. Are we in company? We have, it may be, captious tempers to manage, idle reports to discountenance, pernicious maxims to combat, profane actions to censure. Do we prosper? What a source of little duties is prosperity, if we sincerely love virtue, and what a source of little sins, if we are not vigilant against temptations to vice! Are we in sickness? How many miserable comforters! How many distasteful remedies! What grievous wearinesses! So many occasions to perform little duties, and to commit little sins. Opportunities to commit these return every day and hour, I may almost say every moment. A little sin is a little poison, slow indeed, but continually insinuating itself into the soul, till by degrees it may

issue in death. A man who does not watch against such, is liable to provoke God as often as the continual occasion to commit them presents itself. On the contrary, a man who makes conscience of practising little duties as well as great ones, finds, every day and every hour, opportunities of evincing his faith and love. He has not a religion only of peculiar times and circumstances, which is sometimes justly suspected; but a religion which diffuses itself into every part of his life. By his attention to every little duty, he discharges the greatest of all duties, that which St. Paul prescribes to all Christians: "Whether ye eat or drink or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."—SAURIN.

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Moral Influences of Real Faith in the Gospel.

How little do they understand the revelation of God's redeeming love, who impute to it a tendency to dissolve, or even to relax the bonds of moral obligation. They discover equally little acquaintance with the nature of the Gospel, and with the constitution of the human mind. As soon will filial love, engendered by parental tenderness, and associated with esteem of parental excellence, show *itself in* indifference and contumely, in the studied

frustration of parental wishes, and the contumacious spurning of the parental yoke. As soon will gratitude to a benefactor instigate him who feels and cherishes it, to defamation and outrage. That the grace of the gospel may be misunderstood —that it may be perverted to the worst purposes— we are far from denying. What is there beyond the reach of perversion by "hearts deceitful above all things and desperately wicked"? The semblance of filial love itself may be assumed in hypocritical villany. But who ever thinks of alleging because such a case is possible, or has been actually exemplified, that this is the natural and appropriate tendency of parental kindness? The very wonder and horror which the occurrence of such an exception inspires, most impressively evince what, according to the universal feelings of mankind, are the natural tendencies of paternal kindness, and what the expected indications of filial love. What would be our emotions were we to discover that the man whom we had been regarding as our enemy, keeping aloof from him and treating him as such, opposing his will, thwarting his purposes, traducing his reputation—has been all the while acting the part of our best friend, unwearied in the exercise of his kindness, devising plans for our happiness, relinquishing good and encountering evil for our sake? What a

would the discovery send through our hearts! what shame, what eager solicitude to compensate for the past and to attest our sincerity by the unremitting devotedness of self-denied activity in the service of him whom we have wronged! Similar in nature, though heavier in pressure, are the feelings of a sinner, when first, by the illumination of the Divine Spirit, he discerns the true character of the Being against whom he has all along been trespassing, whom he has regarded with the feelings only of jealousy and suspicion, of distrust and fear and aversion, as all sternness and repulsiveness,—an implacable foe or rigorous judge, with the frown of wrath upon His brow and the thunderbolt of vengeance in His hand,—when, through the medium of the Cross, he sees into the heart of God, and discovers what infinitude of love is there,—when instead of an incensed and ruthless enemy, he beholds the best and kindest of friends, whose very nature is love, whose very delight is in mercy! This is the discovery that melts the heart to contrite sorrow. Holiness awes; justice alarms; love subdues. Thenceforward, the authority of God is his rule, the grace of God his motive, the glory of God his end, and the blessing of God his portion.—WARDLAW.

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Advice to a Christian in Spiritual Dejection.

WITH regard to the cure of your disquietude, the following suggestions present themselves. Lay it down as a certain principle, that religion consists more in an intelligent and determinate choice of the will, than in any ardent transport of the affections. Consider that there is a certain degree of afflicting ourselves for past sins and for present imperfections, which is so far from being our duty, that it is likely to prove a snare, and to produce consequences displeasing to our gracious Father in heaven, and injurious both to ourselves and others. Fix it in your understanding as a certain truth, that the grand security of the soul lies in deliberately entrusting itself to Christ, as chosen in all His offices, and devoting itself to God through Him, endeavouring to practise what God's word requires, and to forbear what it forbids, referring all its concerns, not excepting even the degrees of spiritual comfort, to His wise and gracious determination. In your addresses at the throne of grace, be more intent upon the sincerity of the heart, than about the flow of the affections, which are not and cannot be immediately in our own power, but may, humanly speaking, depend upon a thousand physical causes, the nature of which

we do not so much as imagine. Remember how much of religion consists in trusting in God, and hoping in His mercy, and how suitable this is to the peculiar constitution of the gospel, and the character which Christ our Mediator bears; by consequence how essential a branch of gratitude it is. Recollect, that after all, it is by faith in the merits and intercession of Christ alone that we are to obtain justification and life, that the best Christians, while in this world, have their imperfections, and may and must, under a sense of these, apply daily to the great Advocate, and renew the actings of their faith upon His efficacious sacrifice and intercession. Endeavour to exert yourself as much as may be, in attempts at usefulness; disburden yourself as much as possible of anxious thoughts concerning futurity, whether as to things temporal or spiritual; leaving future contingencies in the hands of God. Be thankful for the least glimmering of hope; and take heed that you do not suspect those comforts which lead you to God and happiness to be delusions, because they are not so permanent and effectual as you could wish. As human nature must have its weary intervals, look unto God in these as seeing that secret tendency of soul to Him which we have neither tears nor words to express, but which says, Lord Thou knowest that I love Thee, or that I

would. Thou knowest I *would* prefer the sensible exercise of it to any other delight.—DODDRIDGE.

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The Conflict of Hope.

YOU say—I feel scarcely any faith in me. I ask you then, would you willingly believe? If you feel such a desire, this is itself belief. For God must "work in us to will." If therefore you would willingly believe, you feel God's working in you, and you may have the consolatory hope, that He who worketh in you to will, will also perfect that which concerneth you. Hope must be tried not only by the withdrawment of temporal comfort, but also by the withdrawment of grace in deep spiritual conflicts. For all things must be withdrawn from us in the trial of hope; therefore even the very best gifts of God on which we might rely, in order that our hope may rest purely and merely on God Himself. In such a trial one must hope where there is *no* hope, or "against hope," as we read of Abraham (Rom. iv. 18). Nay, one must be wholly denuded *(ausgezogen)* as Christ was,—forsaken of all, even of God. And this is to be rightly conformed to His image. Thus hope is thoroughly tried. In other tribulations, patience, humility, and love are tried. But in

this conflict, hope is especially tried and assaulted. A man in this state is as if bereft and robbed of all his grace; but yet is crowned with hope which will not utterly forsake him, though it may seem expiring. For although in these extremities (*hohen nöthen*) there will often arise impatience and criminal murmuring, yet does God awaken a breathing of the soul *(kleines seufzen)* which contradicts these: so shall they be forgiven, and the sufferer plucked as a brand from the burning. That is no despair which takes place against our will, and which is contradicted with "groanings that cannot be uttered;" but it is the severest proof and conflict of hope.—Christ exclaimed "my God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" All consolation was lost and gone. Yet not the less was God with Him and upholding Him. Is not this surpassingly wonderful, that the Lord Christ could in this anguish obtain no comfort, who yet was One with God, being at once God and man? Yet God with His consolations was so deeply hidden, that His human nature discerned no comfort. Did this happen to the Lord Christ who was One with the eternal Godhead, and anointed with the oil of joy? What wonder if such a tribulation often assails feeble man!—ARNDT.

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Spiritual Privation.

In this spiritual dereliction one is plunged so deeply in unbelief that he cannot discern his faith. All the strength of faith concentrates itself in one inexpressible sigh, in which it is unconsciously hidden. He cannot believe that God is gracious to him, and exclaims, how gladly would I believe if God would give me grace! Scripture cannot comfort him, until the storm be past. Thus God causes man to perceive his nothingness. But still in that hidden inexpressible sigh, He causes Himself to be discerned as afar off: and thus is the sufferer upholden.

This privation is more useful to us than all the glory and enjoyment of this world; though it be indeed most grievous and tedious to our nature, so be entirely for a while deprived of God as to our feeling and experience. It is truly a pain above all pain. Yet in this fiery trial we learn true humility, true repentance, and what an exalted good is God, without whom there can be no true and firm consolation. That cannot be fully learnt except in this school, and yet it is the highest lesson which in our present life we can and ought to learn.

Taulerus reckons extreme spiritual conflicts among the special gifts of God, and thus describes

them:—in great conflicts God takes away from man all that He has given him, and shows him to the uttermost what he is in himself, so that he may see and know what he is capable of, and how it would be with him in the withdrawment of God's grace. In such cases, he is so deeply deserted that he knows nothing of grace, of consolation, of anything that he possessed before. For all is withdrawn, hidden, taken away; so that he knows not whither he shall turn. In this abandonment it is exceedingly needful that he should comport himself as God would have him; that he should give himself up to God's sovereign will and judgment. It is indeed a great thing that holy martyrs have yielded up their lives according to the will of God; such inward consolation was theirs that they held all sufferings light, and died with joy: but there is no suffering like being deprived of God and His consolations. This surpasses all. For in this state all miseries and frailties and evils and assaults are renewed which have before been vanquished, and attack the soul in the most overwhelming manner, much more so than when it was yet in its sins. But here should it humbly suffer, and resign itself to the Divine will, as long as God requires.—Arndt.

Care of the Soul Encouraged.

WHO put the thoughts of the excellence of things eternal into thy mind in this wanton age? wherein the thoughts of eternal life and salvation are with many like the Morocco ambassador and his men,—of strange faces, in strange habits, with strange gestures and behaviour, monsters to behold.

Since the world has slighted and despised the cogitations wherewith thy soul is exercised, what strong and mighty supporter is it with which thou bearest up thy spirit, and takest encouragement in this thy unoccupied and singular way? Certainly it is something above thyself, more mighty to uphold thee than are the power and malice of the world to cast thee down, or thou couldst not bear up, with the stream and force thereof against thee.

Thou wilt say perhaps, I know my soul is an excellent thing, and that the world to come and its glories, even in the smallest glimpse thereof, do swallow up all the world that is here; yet I meet with many discouragements which weaken my strength in the way.—Pray tell me what are these?—Why, the amazing greatness of this my enterprise, that is one thing. I am pursuing things of the highest, the greatest, the most enriching nature, even eternal things: but when the

heat of my spirit in the pursuit is a little abated, methinks I hear myself asking,—Fond fool, canst thou imagine that such a gnat or pismire as thou art, can take and possess the heavens, and mantle thyself up in eternal glories? If thou shouldest make first a trial of thy endeavours upon things far lower, crowns, kingdoms, dukedoms, or the like, how vain these attempts! and yet thou thinkest to possess thy soul of heaven! Away, away! by the height thereof thou mayst well conclude it is far above out of thy reach, by the breadth thereof too large for thee to grasp, by the excellent glory too good for thee to possess. These are the thoughts that weaken my strength in the way.—But I answer,—The greatness of thy aims does but show the nobleness of thy soul, in that it cannot, will not, be content with such low things as the baseborn spirits of the world content themselves withal. And as to the greatness of the things thou aimest at, they are not too great for *God* to give, and He has promised to give them to the soul that seeketh Him; yea, He hath prepared the kingdom, given the kingdom, and laid up in the kingdom of heaven the things that thy soul longeth for. Faint not, but let thy hand be strong, for thy work shall be rewarded.—BUNYAN.

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Sale of the Soul.

WERE it in our power to gain the whole world by losing our own souls, or being actually universal monarchs; were we obliged to sacrifice this vast empire to recover our souls already lost; were we, being smitten with the splendid offer, or being alarmed at the immense price of our purchase,—to prefer the whole world before our own souls, we might then, if not exculpate our conduct, yet at least give a little colour to it. A reason of state, a political motive, such as that of governing a whole world, would from its grandeur, naturally have some influence over us. The titles of sovereign or emperor, might naturally charm souls like ours. Sumptuous palaces, superb equipages, devoted courtiers cringing before us, and all that exterior pomp which surrounds the princes of the earth, would fascinate such feeble eyes, and infatuate such puerile imaginations as ours. Could we obtain the government of the whole world by the sale of our souls, if we could not justify that conduct, we might extenuate the guilt of it. But is this our case? Is it in our power to gain the whole world? Oh shame of human nature! This intelligent, this immortal soul, this soul redeemed by the blood of the Saviour of the *world, is* often parted with for

nothing, and, as it were, for less than nothing. When by dissipation and sloth, by injustice and deceit, by malice and enmity, we shall have procured from sin all the rewards that we can expect, what shall we have gained? Cities? provinces? kingdoms? a long and prosperous reign? God hath not placed these in our choice. His love would not suffer Him to expose us to a temptation so violent. Accordingly men put up their souls at a lower price. See this old man, bowing under his age and stepping into the grave; at what price does he exchange his soul? At the price of a few days of dying life, a few pleasures smothered (so to speak) under a pile of years, buried under the ice of old age. That military officer, who lives only for pleasure and display, at what rate does he value his soul? He loses it for a few hours of licentious enjoyment, and for the false glory of uniting blasphemy and politeness. What does yon mechanic get for his soul? One acre of land perhaps, or a cottage larger and less inconvenient than his neighbour's. That soul for which the whole world would not be a sufficient price, is often given for the meanest and vilest objects. Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this!—SAURIN.

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Satanic Temptation.

IN his sixth psalm, composed in sickness and dejection, David searches and reasons with himself—Why should God show mercy to one that so heinously had offended, and justly was tormented by God's hand for his transgressions?—He finds no other ground that is sure and permanent, except God's infinite goodness, which neither tempests of wind nor floods of water are able to overthrow or undermine. If God appear to be our enemy, and to have left us, how hard and difficult it then is to call for His grace and for His assistance, none knows except such as have learned it by experience, neither yet can any man do it except the children of God. But how piercing are the eyes of faith, that in so deep a dungeon of desperation, can yet espy, in the very midst of this oppressive darkness, plentiful goodness to remain in our God; yea, and such goodness as is sufficient and able to overcome and swallow up all the iniquities of His children. Hereby we are taught, in the extremity of our trouble, to run to God's goodness only; there to seek comfort by Christ Jesus. My purpose is to edify those whom God hath called from darkness to light; whose eyes it hath pleased His mercy so to open, that they feel the flesh to rebel against the Spirit, even in the hour

of their greatest perfection; so that all pov justice, and all virtue proceeding from us, contaminated, that the very good works wh do must be cleansed by another, and that, fore, none of them can be an infallible grc our prayer, nor a sufficient cause why we be heard. But the goodness of God, as it finite, so can it not be defiled by our sin, passes throughout the same, and will show to our consolation, even as the beams of the sun pass through the dark clouds, to comfo quicken such herbs and creatures as throug were almost fallen into most deadly decay. the goodness of God only remains, in all s the sure foundation to the afflicted, against Satan is unable to prevail. The knowledge is so necessary to the afflicted conscience without the same it is very hard to withstai assaults of the adversary;* for as He is s subtle spirit, and vigilant to trouble the cl of God, so it is easy to him to deface and

* "If there were no other proof (says an eminent w the existence of an evil spirit, whose pleasure it is to us to evil, I should find the certainty of this in the dis which seizes me to averseness from all that is good. that there is an adversary of good. I am persuaded c only from revelation, but above all by the positive fe the existence of this wicked and rebellious spirit."— HALLER.

mine the grounds and causes that are within man; and especially when we are in trouble :— yea he can persuade us that we want those things which, most assuredly, we have received by God's gift and grace. As for example, if we desire to be delivered with David and Job, from anguish of conscience, Satan can suddenly object, "What appertain their examples unto *thee?* They had many notable and singular virtues which thou lackest." If we desire remission of sins with Magdalene, with Peter, or with any other offenders, he hath these darts ready to shoot; "They had faith, but thou hast none; they had true repentance, thou art but a hypocrite; they hated sin and continued in good works, but thou allowest sin and dost no good at all." By these means can he who is the accuser of us and of our brethren, ever find out some crafty accusation to trouble the weak conscience of the afflicted, as long as ever it resteth upon anything that is within itself. And it does so, till, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, we are enrapt and taken up to the contemplation of our God, so that our minds are fixed only upon His infinite goodness, trusting by the same to receive mercy.

When the afflicted soul can thus forsake and refuse whatever is in man, and can stay itself, how little soever it be, upon God's infinite goodness,

then are the fiery darts of Satan quenched. Although the stormy tempest cease not suddenly, it shall hurt nothing; it is sufficient that this anchor be cast out which assuredly shall preserve your ship, that she violently run not upon the foreland of desperation.—JOHN KNOX.*

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Mystery of the Soul's Futurity.

SOUL, thou mysterious guest, aspiring flame,
Who shall thy latent destinies unveil?
Absorption—life—extinction?—I enquire
Of the world's loftiest sages, but in vain!
Dark doubt those minds o'erclouds.
Uniting all
The sparks of ancient wisdom, Socrates,
And Plato next, in brightest days of Greece
Sought the prime Truth. Two thousand years are gone,
I seek it still: two thousand more will glide,
Irrevocable, to the boundless past,

* He adds "I fear not the blasphemous voices nor their raging against God and against His own eternal verity, who are not ashamed to affirm that this kind of doctrine makes men negligent to do good works; against whom no otherwise will I contend than the apostle doth, saying, 'Their condemnation is just.'"

And still the sons of men will grope for light
Amid thick shades,—truth baffling still their search;
For God—none else—combines its scatter'd rays.
Thus, prone to close mine eyes despondingly,
No hope awhile relieves me; and my soul
Without a guide or a consoler, flits
From shadowy life into a desolate grave,
And bears to the great void, the vast unknown,
Virtues uncheer'd and unrequited woes!
—Answer; O nature's Ruler! if thou art,
I have disastrous claim thy rule to loathe.
The hireling, when his wearisome task is done,
Sits in calm twilight, and his dole receives;
For me, alas! when sunk beneath life's load
My course is run, the wages are but death.
But while I utter doubts and murmurings
Profane, and weeping pore upon the grave,
Faith, newly waken'd, sheds a vital beam
Of hope on the dim future, and renews
E'en in old age the spring-tide of the soul.
This faith consoles me 'mid life's hardnesses;
Unravels life's enigma; reassures
My sadden'd heart, and opens to my view
The bright horizon of eternity.
This faith which guides me to the tomb unscar'd,
(Fond memory whispers oft,) environ'd erst
My cradle; the one goodly heritage

Of promise from our forefathers came down
Age after age; our mind receiv'd it first
Like life or sunshine, free gifts from on high,
As milk o' the soul, flowing to infancy
From mothers' lips, distilling through the heart.
The babe essaying new articulate sound
Lisps faith's sublimest symbol; and beneath
A mother's eye, imbibes unconsciously
The faith, the hope, from which all graces spring.
Ah doubt it not, if truth was made for man
It has this blest simplicity; it comes
In infant days to touch the heart with love,
To abide in memory, to unfold in act,
Like a small grain to germinate unseen,
And growing still, man's stormy summer past,
To bear its fruit of immortality.

Sun of the soul, lend to my dying eyes
Thy mystic light; come from the sphere Divine!
O vivifying star, within me rise!
I'have none but thee! in sad funereal hours
Proud reason "pales its ineffectual fire,"
Quench'd, like frail life, amid sepulchral gloom!
Oh come thou to replace it; with the flood
Of cloudless day to inundate all my soul!
Outshine the sunbeams I can hail no more,
My star of eve—but *never-setting* star!

DE LAMARTINE.

Preciousness of the Soul.

TELL me not, the lost brother is only *one;* remember he *is* a brother, the creature whom God hath so earnestly cared for, for whom so many works were wrought, on whose behoof the precious blood was shed and ransom paid; for whom was the heaven stretched forth and the sun enkindled; for whom the moon revolves and the various chorus of the stars sheds brightness; for whom the sea was poured out and the air diffused, the earth was established, the fountains gushed, the rivers flowed, and the mountains are founded; for whom are the pastures and gardens, the seeds and trees, the varieties of plants, the products of the mountain and the wilderness, of cities and plains, of the forests and the hills; for whom the myriad tribes of fishes, the many quadrupeds, the multitude of birds; for whom were the law, the prophets, the apostles; for whom occurred unnumbered miracles. In a word (for why need I speak of many things?) for whom the only-begotten Son of God became man, and as man was crucified and slain.

Meditate the concernment and the operation (*πραγματεία*) of God for man's salvation, and despise not any one of mankind, but when this spiritual assembly is dissolved, seek him that is absent, and do not desist till you have brought him hither,

united him to his mother (*i.e.*, the church), drawn him away from his evil habits, saved the captive, rescued the shipwrecked, snatched him who is seized by brutal passions from the devouring beasts.

Say not it is one only, but consider it is a soul for whom all things visible were made; for whom laws and penalties were ordained, and countless wonders wrought, and manifold acts of Deity; for whom God spared not even His beloved Son. Reflect what a price was laid down for one, and despise not His salvation: but go, bring him back to us, persuade him to forsake his way, and not to fall into deeper evil.—CHRYSOSTOM.

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Character of St. Paul.

TRULY we have need of armour, for the battle is every day; and not with our fellow-men only, but with invisible powers; with demons more barbarous than our thousand foes; against the implacable tyrant who wages war without declaring it, never announces the time of his assault, but casts his darts in secrecy. The blessed Paul, that champion against the world, describing this warfare, exclaims,—"Be strong in the Lord and in the power of *His* might;" and again, "we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with principalities

and powers, and against the rulers of the darkness of this world." See how he animates the minds of the soldiers, and stirs up their spirit: how he equips the host; striking at sloth, banishing tardiness. There are two faults in war which chiefly discomfit the soldier: the one, cowardice, which annuls valour; the other, unwatchfulness or incautiousness, which gives occasion to the foe of assailing him unprepared; for neither is the timid fit for combat, being easily seized by fear, nor can the wholly fearless subdue his enemies, if from overmuch confidence he neglects precaution. Paul, correcting both these faults, that they may not be negligent, describes the host of their foes; and that they may not despond, brings to their aid the power of the sovereign Leader of that war—sets Christ himself in the midst of them.

Thus, like a most excellent officer, Paul marshals his army, expelling from the minds of the faithful all passions which would impair fortitude, and showing his love towards those who are exceedingly beneath himself in blamelessness of life; for he applies to them the language of near kindred, saying, "finally, my brethren;" and truly he shows much more of kindred affection (φιλοστοργιάν) than those often do who were nursed in the same mother's bosom, for he had "them in his heart," and carried them with him through the world:

such was the largeness of his love. And this not only in times of quiet and peace, but in the midst of perils. Even when imprisoned, in extreme danger, and expecting death, he cared for his converts still, often writing or dictating his epistles from a prison, with a chain on his hand, and his right hand in bonds. When about to stand at a tribunal to endure a trial and to be led to death, as he appeared before his judges, dismissing all those thoughts—fear, peril, threats, deaths, penalties, tortures, executioners, the wrath of rulers, the snares of plotters, the stripes or scourge,—still was he mindful of the believers, and his soul, at that same time was so loosed from the bonds of the body, that while abiding in the flesh, it soared to the summit of the heavens, and performed its hard tasks on earth, as if meanwhile translated to its seat above. And that ye may learn these things are not spoken with exaggeration or flattery, hear his own words, "Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart:" adding, "both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel." You see how never in any case he dismissed them from his mind; if bonds and tribunals and a chain could not weaken his recollection of them, how much less would seasons of repose do so? "Be*cause,*" he says, "I have you in my heart." Do you

see how, little by little, his phrase grows stronger? It is much to "have them in his heart," much more to have them so when he was in chains; yet more still in "the defence and confirmation of the gospel." For he seems to allude to the time at which he was haled before judges, and encountering the uttermost peril.

Even standing there, he says, I was pondering not how I might escape the imminent danger, or how I might baffle conspiracy, but was delighting in your love, and communing with you the absent. Neither length of journeys, nor pressure of affairs, nor greatness of hazards, nor fear of rulers, nor tumult of the people, not death in view, and naked swords, nor troops of executioners, nor any such thing, would wrest me from the remembrance of you.—Nothing is more imperial, nothing more sublime than love. It flies above all those weapons, higher than the darts or snares of Satan. Looking down from the heights of heaven, as a rushing mighty wind sweeps away the troublesome dust, so is the strength of love wont to repel and vanquish the assaults of all the passions. Thus was it with St. Paul. He had sufficient consolation in the salvation and remembrance of these whom he loved.

But what means this, "the confirmation of the gospel"? Though *it is* but a phrase, it contains

a profound sea of thoughts. The word of God is as a pearl, shining through all, not with multiplicity of words, but in its brevity demonstrating their force and power.—CHRYSOSTOM.

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Persecutions the Confirmation of the Gospel.

WHAT then is the "confirmation of the gospel"? Why does Paul treat of this when speaking of tribunals, prisons, and chains? At the first dissemination of that gospel, society was full of agitation and tumult. For when eleven men alone opposed themselves to the inhabited world, attempting to subvert ancient customs, to destroy long-lasting delusions, to overthrow the habits and laws of fathers, grandfathers, and their whole ancestry, to shake and ruin the institutions of cities, speaking against all men, whether philosophers, rhetoricians, governors, judges, tyrants, slaves or freemen, husbandmen or mariners,—then was a grievous war provoked, and as I have said, all was full of uproar. Everywhere were rocks and precipices, and the sea has not been so wild and turbid when lashed by opposing winds, as the world was then perturbed; old creeds and opinions being attacked which had been so long fixed and dominant, and this not in two or three cities, but universally: new doctrines being

brought in of which no one ever before heard. Thus the war against the new teachers was in all respects implacable; for it divided families and rent asunder relationships. As the preaching made progress and became familiar to many, hostility was excited towards all who received the word of godliness. The father disinherited his son, the husband despised the wife, masters were at war with their servants, subjects with their rulers. It was more bitter than any civil war, if indeed one may call it a war and not something more oppressive, for in wars there is some proportion between the forces, and each army assaults its enemy. But then it was not so. The one party attacked at will, the other was assaulted but not permitted to assault the foe, or to defend itself from their devices. For so had their Leader commanded,—"I send you forth as sheep among wolves." "Be ye wise as serpents and harmless as doves." And He not only enjoined them not to be aggressive, but to submit to wanton insult. For to "turn the other cheek to the smiter," and to be "as sheep among wolves," denotes nought else than to have suffering allotted to them, that their victory might be the more splendid. How so? Because though so few in number, they overcame the world. Suffering, but not acting; assailed, but not assailing; conspired against, but

not conspiring; slain, but not slaying,—thus sometimes they changed the wolves, although they had breathed out slaughter, to the gentleness of sheep, so that the word being diffused, and godliness sown; on the other hand, fires were kindled, and hatreds and conflicts, not only against the teachers, but their converts also. For whoever received the word was treated as a common enemy, was driven from his home to foreign lands, or forfeited his property; and ran the hazard of liberty, and even of life. And, as I have said, children and brothers were in the ranks of the persecutors; and disciples, together with their teachers, suffered grievously. To these trials, St. Paul has referred in his letters to the Hebrews, Thessalonians, and Galatians, specifying also (to the Corinthians) the perils and hardships endured by himself in the same cause. Not only were severities of punishment inflicted, but there were also the invectives of orators, and the contradiction of philosophers; nor these alone, for by tradesmen likewise many devices were framed against the Church—"Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil." Thus, as the sea is never without waves, so was the soul of Paul full of a thousand trials, daily dangers from without and within, by words, by works, by frauds, by *privations*. No discourse can express the cloud of

those darts, or the multitude of those waves. The preachers and their followers incurred the same dangers; and, seeing these things, many of the weaker sort grew faint, reluctant, and dejected. They had heard the good news with hope, the future kingdom, resurrection, incorruption; but *here*, present and palpable, were the grievous facts in experiment and endurance, fires, imprisonments, wars, hatreds, deaths; their teachers now in prison, or now reviled and led away to death; on every side clouds of evils and a deep night of tribulation, which enveloped all and filled them with sore distress. How does the apostle elevate their depressed minds? He does it by a word,—"Lift up the hands which hang down and the feeble knees," meaning not the bodily limbs, but the thoughts and purposes which are enfeebled or quelled by the multitude of trials. Again, he adduces the greatest of encouragements,—"Yet a little while and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." He reminds them likewise of former days, in which they had endured "a great fight of afflictions;" as if to say, blush at the contrast of your former noble conduct; show that the end shall not be unworthy of the beginning. Lastly, he refers to his own present sufferings, speaking of his bondage and his chain as for "the confirmation *of the* gospel," as if saying, no

only the dead who have been raised, the lepers cleansed, the demons expelled, but *we* also, as prisoners, thus "confirm the gospel." "But (you ask), in what manner? These sayings are new, and seem like an enigma." Hear then in what manner. If we preached without fear of suffering aught painful or terrible, to many who slander us the preaching might appear suspicious; but now that we are persecuted, and endure unnumbered evils, yet not giving way, but becoming the more earnest,—we give proof, even to the most shameless, that we are the heralds of truth, and that a Divine power is with us which alleviates all these pains, and does not permit such manifold trials to vanquish its proclaimers. Thus, although so few in number, we prevail against the greatest obstacles. If any one therefore would have a clear demonstration that it is Divine power which upholds us, let him recollect the perils, the prisons, the chains. For it is not in mere human strength to steer amidst so many rocks, to navigate amid so many storms, to encounter so many weapons; but it demands a strength Divine and invincible. Therefore is the "chain" the "confirmation of the gospel."

You see then, how tribulation has confirmed the gospel. So when Paul prayed many times for the removal of trial, he was answered, "My grace

is sufficient for thee. My strength is made perfect in weakness." Christ speaks of weakness as to the troubles endured, persecutions, temptations, stratagems, revilings. What He means is,—I could forbid these things, stay the warfare, quell the tempest; but I have not done so, that my power might be the more manifest; for it would not have been so displayed if those things had not happened, as by their taking place and yet not prevailing.

We account him the best pilot (not who can steer his vessel in a calm, but), him, who amidst rocks, and billows, and tempests, can convey his passengers safely. So in this case was the greatest wonder wrought, that amidst a thousand sufferings they conquered and overcame those who oppressed them. When the Jews had cast Peter and John into prison, observe, in dismissing them, how they doubted, saying,—What shall we do to these men? That people who had killed prophets and digged down altars, who were stained with the blood of the Lord, having seized two fishermen, unlearned, obscure persons (one of whom had failed at the query of a servant maid), having seized these, bound and unarmed, with neither wealth nor bodily strength, nor power of oratory, nor dignity of birth or of nation, but great poverty, yet doubted how they should dispose of them. Behold how

great is virtuous courage! How trials confirm the gospel! They ask them, "Did we not straitly charge you not to speak in this name!" But ye purpose to bring this man's blood upon us! Well might they answer,—If He be a mere man, wherefore do ye fear? If a God, why not adore? Did you not lately cry, "His blood be upon us and upon our children"? Why do ye dread that blood? Why does it agitate your spirit? Did you not bind and scourge and crucify Him? and behold Him taken from the cross and buried? Did you not seal the sepulchre, and then bribe the soldiers? Did you not spread the rumour that the disciples had stolen the body of their Master? Why then so timid now? Wherefore tremble at the blood? It is that you discern the truth, shining forth through all these events.

When they saw the cause of Christ exalted, and its first dawning brighter than the sun, and its rise foreshowing that it would overspread the world, and wholly chase away the errors unable to withstand its unspeakable force, they feared its power, they tremble at their prisoners, at the condemned, the scourged, the men conspired against, even at the two unlearned teachers. Therefore does Paul declare those trials to be "the confirmation of the gospel;" therefore could he write, "the things concerning me have fallen out

rather to the furtherance of the gospel, and many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear." Who has seen or heard before, that bonds produce courage or a chain boldness, and not only in him who is bound but in those who have been taught by him?

Nevertheless, when these things happened, the preaching *was* by such oppositions strengthened, and the converts, when their teacher was attacked, conspired against, and imprisoned, became more bold, more exulting, more joyful.—You extol what has been said. It remains that we imitate their fortitude; let us be zealous for virtue, let no trials terrify or disturb us. For these are the incitements (*αμμαra*)* of godliness, the wings of philosophy, which make us strong and unconquerable, giving us greater reliance on God, attracting His benevolent regard, and greater grace to overshadow us.—CHRYSOSTOM.

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Censure of Horse Races and the Theatre.

EVEN but one day after the ravages of a fearful and destructive storm, for the staying of which the most solemn public supplications had been offered, you can leap and vociferate at the horse race!

* Rather *αναμματα*.

Rather than be gazing on that contest of dumb animals, why do ye not put the yoke, which would be light and easy, on your animal passions, and seeking the prize of your high calling from above, run not from abomination to abomination (*μύσος*), but from earth to heaven. For such a race and contest would yield both true pleasure and abundant gain. But you leave your own real interests to chance altogether, and sit watching the victories of others, spending even so solemn a day as this in vain, to no good purpose, and even for evil.* Do ye not know that when we place money in our servants' hands, we require of them an account even to the last penny? So will God demand of us an account of the days of our life, even how we have expended each one of them. What excuse shall we offer, when required to give an account of *this* day? For you the sun has

* In another homily, he says, "Those who have left us, are sitting as spectators of irrational horses, drenching each other with scoffs and insults, inflaming each other with wrath and strife, for which there is no excuse, rejoicing with a gladness more miserable than grief, over conquering charioteers and broken-down horses, than which nothing is more senseless. For tell me, why do you rejoice, and leap, and exult, and go thence with bright looks? And why do *you* grieve, and veil yourself, and stoop low, and vex your soul? Because this has won and that has lost. What sense is there either in the gladness or the grief? What penalties do not you *both deserve*?"

rison, the moon has illumined the night, the various choir of stars has sparkled; for you the winds blow and the rivers glide; for you the seeds germinate and plants flourish; for you nature maintains its order, the day dawns, the night succeeds,—all things are arranged for you; but while creation is thus ministering for your good, you are fulfilling the desire of the devil; and while God grants you to dwell in a world of bounties, you, as if the former day were not enough, on Easter eve (when you might have paused a little from your former wickedness) run [from the hippodrome] to the theatre, from the smoke into the fire; plunging into another gulf and a deeper. Old men have disgraced their white hair, youths have rushed down the precipice, even fathers have taken their children, leading their uncorrupted childhood early into the abyss of wickedness; so that one would not err in calling such men child-murderers, and not fathers, who ruin the souls of their offspring by wickedness.

What wickedness? you may ask: for at this I grieve deeply, that being sick you know not that you *are* sick; else you would seek a physician. [He then describes the licentious exhibitions of the theatre, in terms which I do not translate, but which those of the ballet in the modern opera too much resemble—and *then* asks:—] Do not hence

arise the breaking up of families, destruction of morals, dissolution of marriage, wars and fightings, disgusts without just cause? For when you return captivated and enslaved, your wife is deemed uncomely, your children burdensome, your servants are a vexation, your house is unpleasing, your ordinary cares in domestic management annoy you, every one who approaches you is a burden and an offence.—CHRYSOSTOM.

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Christianity has Effected what Philosophy Failed in.

VIRTUE alone can form men truly great. It costs much less to gain victories than to vanquish self. It is much more easy to conquer provinces and subdue a people, than to overcome a passion. Even pagan morality admitted this. At least, the conflicts in which firmness, intrepidity, military science are pre-eminent, are actions rarely occurring, which even in a long life may be few; and when it is required to be great only at certain moments, nature summons all her forces, and pride, for a short time, can supply the place of virtue. But the conflicts of faith are conflicts of every day. We have to contend with enemies who revive amidst defeat. If you yield to weari-

ness, you fall. Even victory has its dangers. Pride, far from aiding you, becomes the most dangerous foe you have to combat. All by which we are surrounded furnishes weapons against us. Even our own hearts prepare ambushes. Without ceasing we have to begin the encounter anew. In a word, one may at certain times be more strong or more successful than outward enemies. But how grand a victory is it to be always stronger than one's self. Such however is the glory of religion. Philosophy disclosed the disgracefulness of the passions, but it did not enable men to subdue them, and its pompous precepts were rather the eulogy of virtue than the remedy of vice. It was even necessary to the glory and triumph of true religion, that the greatest genius and all the force of human reason should have exhausted itself in the endeavour to make men virtuous. If such men as Socrates and Plato had not been the world's great teachers before Jesus Christ, and had not attempted in vain to regulate morals and correct mankind by strength of reason only, man might have ascribed his virtue to the superiority of his reason, or to the beauty of virtue itself; but those preachers of wisdom failed to make men wise, and it behoved that the vain efforts of philosophy should prepare new

triumphs for God's grace. It is, in fine, that grace which has introduced into our world the really wise man, whom all the pomp and parade of human reason could but predict. That grace has not, like philosophy, confined its achievements to attempt at forming here and there one wise man in each succeeding age; it has peopled cities, kingdoms, wildernesses; the whole world has been for it as a Lyceum, whence, as from "the high places and at the gates" it has proclaimed wisdom to all men. Not only among the civilized and polished has it chosen its sages; the Greek and the barbarian, the Roman and the Scythian, have been alike called to the Divine philosophy; not for the learned alone has it reserved the sublime knowledge of its mysteries, the simple have prophesied like the sage, the ignorant themselves have become its teachers and apostles. What shall I say? Its doctrine was in appearance foolish, yet philosophers subjected their proud reason to that sacred folly; it announced only crosses and sufferings, yet Cæsars became its disciples. It alone taught mankind that chastity, humility, temperance, might have place even on the throne; that the very seat of passions and pleasures might become the seat of unblameable virtue. What a glory for our holy faith!—MASSILLON.

Appeal to those who are Careless of the great Futurity.

O ETERNITY!—Why can I not follow you everywhere, to recall to you the recollection of that eternity which escapes your thought! I would enter your dwellings, I would find my way into the closets where worldly affairs wholly engross you. Amazed at your deep infatuation, I should exclaim,—Will you then ever forget your most weighty interests? You are attentive to the affairs of a family, perhaps of some greedy or covetous heir, but your most urgent business, that which is intimately personal, the affair of your salvation, is *it* cared for or completed? O eternity! What is all else to eternity?

I would go into your streets or places of resort, where I might see you, and exclaim,—Whither do ye run, blind and deluded men? To what do your movements, your agitations, your eagerness lead you? Where is your wisdom, to be thinking only of time, and forgetting that eternity which pursues you, draws near, and will soon overtake you, and in which you will irrecoverably lose yourselves.

I would go into your assemblies of pleasure, into the midst of your games and diversions, and there with a fearful and appalling voice which

would quench all joy in your hearts, I would cry, —O eternity! what is all this to eternity?—except it be to further all the trespasses which will augment its unhappiness, to heap up on your heads a treasure of wrath, and to deepen the vast abyss of perdition!

I would address those women of the world, so idolising self, so occupied with luxury and whatever flatters vanity, so attached to a thousand frivolous embellishments which they make their supreme, not to say their sole, concern. With a single word, I would make them feel the uselessness of their solicitudes. O eternity, eternity! what is all that for eternity!

What then are your grounds for believing your last hour so far off? Is it youth? Yes, you reply, I am but twenty or thirty years old. Oh, it is not you who are twenty, it is death which has gained twenty years upon you. Beware! eternity approaches. Do you know what eternity is? It is a clock whose pendulum says without ceasing, Ever!—never,—never! ever,—ever! Amidst those ceaseless oscillations, a rejected soul exclaims—What is the hour? And the same voice or sound replies,—Eternity!

BRYDAYNE.

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Christianity the Gift of God.

HUMANITY has estranged itself from God; but the desire of being reunited with Him survives. It is evinced even by false religions. But neither imagination, nor reason, nor the heart, nor the conscience, can accomplish that desire. Conscience teaches that for this we need two things, which our own faculties cannot give us, pardon and regeneration. Without these there can be no satisfactory religion; we might rather say, no religion at all. And shall we not then turn our eyes to the gospel, which seems to have divined the secrets of our nature; which anticipates all the necessities of the soul? Shall not the view of the cross where our pardon is written, and the promise of the Holy Spirit as the source of regeneration, move and attract our hearts? Let us hail this religion, which responds to all the wants of man, which opens to imagination the sublimest prospects, which melts the heart by the manifestation of love without parallel, which engages reason in the study of a system most vast and Divine, which renders conscience at once more tender and more peaceful,—the religion of the grace and love of God. This is the religion which never arose in the heart of man, even where there was the greatest culture of his moral sense, and the fullest

development of his intellect; or (as the apostle expresses it) which none of the princes of this world knew.

Yet what was hidden from the highest human wisdom, some poor fishermen of the Judæan lakes quitted their nets to go and announce to the world. They, assuredly, had no more imagination, or intellect, or heart, or even conscience, than the rest of mankind; but they set before the world their crucified Lord, and the world recognised Him whom through long ages it had restlessly sought for in vain. A new morality, new social relations, a new world, arose at the voice of those poor men, ignorant of all literature and all philosophy. Let our common sense decide whether those twelve fishermen brought to the task their own wisdom, or wisdom from above. Let us meditate on these facts. Man could not form a religion for himself. God came to help him in his inability. Let us bless Him profoundly for such aid and such a refuge.—VINET.

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Mysteries in Religion to be expected.

To expect that there should be no mysteries in religion, is in the highest degree unreasonable. What is religion? It is the belief that God places Himself in relation with man, the Infinite with the finite. This is a mystery common to all religion, and in itself impenetrable.

It is impossible that true religion should not present a great number of mysteries. How can it be otherwise in religion, when it is so in nature? The more God gives us there to contemplate, the more He gives us to wonder at. To every creature is attached an enigma. If therefore the display which God has made of Himself in nature gives rise to many questions which we cannot answer, how will it be when another revelation is given; when God the Creator reveals Himself as God the reconciler and Saviour?

With new discoveries must not mysteries multiply? Christianity then must be mysterious, even more so than any other religion, precisely because it is true and sublime. Shall we murmur because we do not comprehend everything in the Gospel? We might as well complain that we cannot grasp the ocean in the hollow of our hand, as that we cannot comprise uncreated Wisdom within the bounds of our intellect.

Every day we admit facts which we understand not. The union of body and soul, the action of thought and will, our very existence itself, all are mysteries. Nor would the explication of these, or of the mysteries of religion, be very valuable or useful to us. It concerns us infinitely to know that Christ is the Son of God and Saviour of men: but do we need to know precisely in what *manner* the Divine and human nature are in His adorable person united?

We shall not comprehend everything in the doctrines of the gospel. We must be saved therefore by what we do not fully comprehend. But is this a calamity? Is our salvation the less? Are we to find fault that the Most High ordains a remaining darkness which we cannot penetrate, when for all that is essential He grants us abundant light? Let us embrace with love the truths which never could have entered into the heart of man, but which, though mysterious, will avail to save us. Let us learn to love, and we shall know hereafter. —VINET.

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The Gospel Understood by the Heart.

IMAGINE on the one hand a man of generous and heroic spirit, ardent in devotedness, and on the other hand one of profound intellect, but destitute of sensibility,—will not the former be always an enigma to the latter? How should he conceive of that burst of enthusiasm, of those acts of abnegation, whose sources are not found in his own soul?

Men will still impute to affectation or hypocrisy the sentiments which they themselves have never experienced. All the efforts of reason cannot give us the idea of a fruit we never tasted, or a perfume which we never inhaled; still less of an affection which we never felt. It is with the elevations of the soul as with the splendours of the skies. When, in a serene night, thousands of stars are beaming from the heavens, their magnificence delights the beholders; but to one who is very shortsighted, however intellectual and observant he may be, the whole celestial prospect is veiled and blank; while a man without talent or culture, whose sight is clear and strong, receives and enjoys the impression of its brilliancy and grandeur.

Another heaven, more glorious than the starry firmament, is opened to us in the gospel. Divine truths are the constellations of that mystic heaven,

more pure and luminous than the host of stars; but we need an eye to see them, and that eye is Love. As light can be discerned only by the eye, love can be understood only by love. Reason can take no step towards comprehending the great mystery of godliness, until it renounce unthankful speculations, and commit the decision to one more capable, that is, to the heart; the heart fixing itself wholly on that love which shines forth gloriously in the work of redemption. Then is the veil rent, and the clouds are dispelled. He who loves has little difficulty in conceiving of love. It appears to him natural that the God who is infinite in all perfections, should be infinite in charity.—Even for those who believe with the understanding, the gospel is veiled or void till the *heart* is engaged. There are among sincere persons many who believe and do *not* believe; Christians as to their desires, pagans as to their hope; converted and not persuaded, enlightened and not consoled. How is it (we ask them) that in the bosom of that religion which you accept, and believe to be Divine, you are yet as foreigners, not at home even in your Father's house? It is because your *heart* is not touched. The heart of Lydia needed to be opened that she might receive the things spoken by Paul. So must your heart *be, that* you may discern the truths which the

art alone discerns. Faith is something else an the product of the intellect. Faith is love. arning may give convictions; love alone gives e.

The first counsel which reason should give us to decline its authority in regard to what is not ithin its province. But reason is proud, self-fficient, and will not yield. When, however, it ows weary and despairs, acknowledging itself ike unable to satisfy its need of light and to ppress it, God's mercy prevails in reason's miliation. Reason no longer pretends to com-ehend. It aspires to live. It asks for grace, and ace is given. It implores salvation, and salva-n is here. Its indigence makes it conceive and prehend what its fancied wealth overlooked. It the Spirit of God who enables us thus to re-ive the gospel with the heart. And then love comes a copious source of light. By it a thou-nd obscurities of Holy Writ are dispelled. Its me gives light as well as warmth. The more love, the more we understand. Our convic-n, once cold, useless, sterile, is changed to a ing faith, full of hope and of good fruits.

VINET.

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Christianity for all Lands and Ages.

No man could invent a positive religion adapted to the whole human race. It would imply powers quite miraculous, that dogmas of his own invention which nature never taught, should be such as to suit and influence every nation and every age. Let a being isolating himself from his country, from his times, from his individuality, divine the fact, the idea, the doctrine, which shall move, convert, vivify men of every age and every land,—that being would not be a man but a God. If there be a Divine religion, it must have this character of universality and perpetuity; doubtless God's kindness embraces all times and all mankind. When He chose a particular nation, it was with an ulterior design to gather from all nations a peculiar people, spiritual and holy. And if there be such a religion, it must be of God. God only is able fully to comprehend man whom He created, and to meet the need of all human kind. Assuredly therefore if there be a positive religion adapted to direct human life, favouring right progress, having no limitation from place or time, that religion is of God. Is there such a religion? Eighteen centuries ago a person arose who announced a religion. It was not the religion of nature. The being of God and a life to come

were truths always presupposed by him. The specialities of his doctrine were such facts as to confound or startle human reason. He preached "God manifest in the flesh;" the God-man; poor, suffering, crucified; the substitution of the innocent for the guilty; a ransom and sacrifice; a new birth; a general calling; an exclusive or special election. These dogmas may frighten some of us, but they subdued the world. They invaded learned Athens, luxurious Corinth, haughty Rome. They gained confessors in the workshops, the prisons, the schools, the tribunals, bringing under the same yoke the Greek and the barbarian. The forms of social life were changing. But these doctrines endured. The Church itself which they had founded tried to alter and efface them, but they survived. Everywhere and always were found souls both in the cottage and the palace to whom redemption was precious, and regeneration needful. No other doctrine, whether religious or philosophic, has lasted—but the doctrine of the cross, always opposed, has persisted in reappearing. You find its followers among the rich and the poor, the learned and the unlettered, in camps and in cities. It is good for all; at all times. It never grows old. Yet it is not a religion which flatters or attracts the natural man. They who dare not reject it, labour to soften

and enervate it. It is deprived of what they are pleased to term its *myths*—and it declines and is ready to die. When it revives, like a plant, it is in the rugged soil of the primitive faith, under the shadow of those mysteries which stagger human reason and which it would fain exclude.

Is it alleged that this religion suits only a certain clime or a certain race and organisation? On the contrary, you pass with its scripture from the European to the African, to the Greenlander, to the Polynesian. Everywhere the message meets a felt want, completes life and renews it. The soul of the slave receives the same impressions as that of Isaac Newton. The lofty intellect of the latter, the mental dulness of the former, have at least one great thought in common. These are facts. Let them be explained as to their causes. It is easier to close the eyes and affirm that Christianity is effete or obsolete. But the sneers of unbelievers will not cause the Most High to delude us. Let us pray for the progress of His holy gospel, and for the proud spirits who scorn it.

VINET.

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Love of the Chief Good.

O MY soul, dignified with God's image, redeemed by Christ's blood, betrothed by faith, enriched by the Spirit, adorned with graces, ranked with angels—love Him by whom thou art so much beloved! Be intent on Him who is intent on thee; seek Him who seeketh thee; love Him who loveth thee; whose love anticipates thine, and is its cause. He has all merit, He is thy reward: He is the vision, and the end! Be earnest with the earnest, pure with the pure, holy with the holy! what thou shouldst appear before God, that should God appear to thee! He who is kind and gentle and of great compassion requires the meek, the kind, the humble, and compassionate. Love Him who drew thee from the lake of misery and from the miry clay. Choose Him for thy friend above all thy friends, who, when thou art bereft of all things, can alone remain to thee. In the day of thy burial, when every friend is gone, He will not forsake thee, but will defend thee from devouring foes, lead thee through an unknown region, bring thee to the streets of the heavenly Sion, and place thee with angels in the presence of His Majesty, where thou shalt hear the angelic melody —Holy, holy, holy! There is the chant of gladness, there the voice of exultation and salvation,

of thanksgiving and praise and perpetual hallelujahs! There is accumulated bliss, and supereminent glory! O my soul, sigh ardently, desire vehemently that thou mayst reach that supernal city, of which such glorious things are spoken, in which is the dwelling-place of all that rejoice! By love thou canst ascend thither. To him who loves, nothing is impossible, nothing difficult. The soul which loves frequently ascends, and ranges freely in the streets of the heavenly Jerusalem, visiting patriarchs and prophets, saluting apostles, admiring the noble army of martyrs and confessors. The heavens and the earth and all that is in them cease not to enjoin me that I should love the Lord my God. But the human heart is not fixed in the desire of things eternal. It is never stable; but more voluble than all volubility; passing from object to object, seeking rest where rest is not. In those perishable transitory things, by which its affections are held captive, it can find no true repose; for it is of such dignity that no good save the chief or supreme good can suffice it. But a right will leads and directs us to God. By it we love, and choose, and approach, and possess the Most Holy; and the triune Majesty condescends to us. Wisdom illumines the soul in the knowledge of truth. *Love* enkindles its desire of goodness. Paternal

grace preserves what has been created, lest it perish.—AUGUSTINE.

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Fulness of the Heavenly Blessedness.

WHEREFORE, frail man, dost thou wander among many things, seeking good for thy temporal and bodily life? Love the one good in which all good is comprised, and it sufficeth. Desire the original good which comprehends all good, and it is enough. What lovest thou, my flesh? What desirest thou, my spirit? *There* is whatever thou canst love or desire. If beauty delight thee, the righteous shall shine forth as the sun; if velocity, or strength, or liberty of movement, which nothing can impede, they shall be as the angels of God. "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body;" certainly spiritual in power, although not in nature. If long and healthful life be thy desire, there is a healthful immortality and everlasting vigour; the just shall live for ever, and their salvation is of the Lord. If full satisfaction be longed for, they "shall be satisfied" when the glory of the Lord appears. If melody be desired, there shall angelic voices sing endlessly to God. If wisdom,—the Word or wisdom of God will show them wisdom in Himself. If friendship,—they shall love *God more* than themselves, and each

other *as* themselves; and God shall love them more than they love themselves; because they love Him, and themselves, and each other for Him; and He loveth Himself, and them for Himself.* If concord be sought, they shall have all one will; for they shall have no will except the sovereign will of God. If power be coveted, they shall have entire power over their will, as God over His. For as God can effect what He wills by Himself, so can they effect what they will by Him; for as they will nothing but what He wills, so does He will whatever they will, and what they will cannot but be. If honour and wealth be aspired after, God will give His good and faithful servants rule over many things; they shall be called the sons of God, heirs of God, co-heirs with Christ. If full security be wished for, truly they shall be *as* certain that nevermore shall this good be wanting to them, *as* they shall be that they will never lose it by choice, and that God who loves them will never take it away from those who love Him and behold Him; and that no one is stronger than God to separate them from Him. But what and how great shall be the joy, when so transcendent and so vast is the good to be enjoyed! —AUGUSTINE.

* "Et Deus illos, plus quam illi seipsos, quia illi illum et *se et invicem* per illum, et ille se, et illos per seipsum."

Thoughts on Christianity.

A THING happens to-day almost before our eyes; fifty persons who saw it relate the fact in fifty different ways, what credit then can I give to facts said to have happened many ages ago? What trust can I have in the gravest historians? What becomes of history itself? Was Cæsar massacred in the midst of the senate? Was there a Cæsar? What a conclusion, you say, what doubts, what a question! You smile and think it unworthy of an answer; and I believe you are right.

But let us suppose that the book which tells of Cæsar is not a common book written by men who tell falsehoods, found by chance among manuscripts containing histories, some true, some apocryphal; suppose it on the contrary, inspired, holy, divine, bearing on itself these characters; let it also be found, for between 1700 and 1800 years extant in a numerous society who have not permitted any alteration in it, but have made it a point of religion to preserve the book; who were even religiously bound to believe the facts contained in that volume concerning Cæsar—confess, Lucilius, you will then doubt whether Cæsar existed.

Philosophy sometimes does not speak rightly

of God. The more subtle and ideal it is, the more vain and useless for explaining to us things which require only good sense (*sens droit*) to be known to a certain point; and which beyond that are inexplicable. To undertake "rendering a reason" concerning God, His perfections, His acts, is going farther than ancient philosophers, than apostles, than the first teachers; but it is not to judge so well; it is to dig long and deep without finding the hidden truth. If we abandon the terms goodness, mercy, justice, almightiness, which give such lofty and amiable ideas of God (whatever effort of imagination be made) we must accept expressions which are dry, sterile, and without clear meaning; we must admit forced thoughts (*creuses*) alien from common notions, or, at the most, subtle and ingenious; and in proportion as one enters into such new metaphysics, one loses something of religion.

How greatly men will concern themselves for the supposed interest of a religion, in which they have little belief, and which their practice contradicts! That same religion which men defend with zeal against those who have a contrary one,—they alter themselves by their private sentiments; adding or retrenching many important things, and not to be shaken in the views which they adopt. Speaking popularly,

we say of a nation—it has but one religion, but to speak exactly it in truth has many, and almost each person has his own.—LA BRUYÈRE.

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Missions from the Heathen supposed.

IF we were to be told that the secret motive of the Siamese embassy was to excite the most Christian king* to renounce his Christianity, to permit the entrance into his dominion of the talapoins (Siamese priests), who would gain access to our houses and inculcate their religion on our wives, our children, and ourselves, by their books and discourses; would build pagodas in our cities, placing in them images of metal to be adored,—with what shouts of laughter and contempt we should hear of schemes so extravagant! Yet we make voyages of 6000 leagues for the conversion of India, Siam, China, and Japan; that is, to offer very gravely to all those nations, propositions which must appear to them very foolish and ridiculous. Nevertheless they bear with our missionaries and priests; listen to them sometimes, let them build their churches and

* That to the King of France (Louis XIV.) in 1686.

pursue their endeavours. What causes these opposite effects on them and on us? Is it not the force of truth?—LA BRUYÈRE.

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Opportunities of doing Good. Choice of the great Future.

IT is not advisable for every sort of person to raise the standard of an almoner, and have all the poor of a town assembled at his door, there to receive their portions; but who, on the other hand, does not know of more secret ills which he may attempt to relieve, either by his direct help or at least through his interposal? Just so it is not given to all to mount the pulpit and dispense the holy word as a missionary or a catechist; but who has not sometimes close by him an irreligious man to reclaim, and bring by gentle and persuasive converse to a more teachable mind? If one might be through one's life the apostle of but a single fellow-man, this were not to be on earth in vain and as a useless burden.

There are two worlds. One where we sojourn a little while, and which we must soon quit to return no more, the other which we must soon enter to "go no more out." Patronage, authority, high reputation, great possessions, serve for this

first world. The contempt or light esteem of all these serves and prepares us for the second. We have to make our choice.—LA BRUYÈRE.

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Christianity should be Accepted even were its Evidence less.

IF my religion were false, I must acknowledge it to be the best contrived snare or deception that it is possible to imagine. It would seem inevitable not to be taken in by it. What majesty; what sublime mysteries; what a connection and linking of all the doctrines; what eminent good sense; what candour and innocence in the founders and first converts; what an invincible and overwhelming force of testimonies rendered for three centuries by numberless persons, the most wise and self-controlled (*modérées*) then on the earth, whom the conviction of one and the same truth supported in exile, in bonds, in the prospect of a cruel death! Take up the world's history from the earliest times. Is there anything like all this in any age? Could the Almighty Himself have been more skilful and successful in misleading me? Which way shall I escape from this deception? Whither shall I go—where shall I cast myself—to find (I say not anything better,

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but) anything which approaches it? If I must perish, it is in holding to this that I would perish; it would be more possible to deny God's being, than to reconcile with His perfections a deceit so specious and complete. But I have thought deeply and cannot be an atheist. I am therefore brought back and "shut up" to my religion. That point is settled. Religion is either true or false. If it be but a vain fiction, there are it may be sixty years lost for the good man, for the ascetic or the recluse; each runs no further risk: but if it be founded on truth itself, then it is for the wicked man a frightful reality. The mere idea of the ills he is preparing for himself disturbs my imagination, thought is too feeble to conceive, and words too slight to express them. Truly, even if we should suppose in the world less certainty than actually exists as to the truth of religion, still there could not be a better part or choice for man than to obey its dictates.

LA BRUYÈRE.

Supposed Wonder-workings of Chance.

LOOK, Lucilius, at this portion of the landscape, more cultured and adorned than the country around it. See the parterres, the groves, the fountains, the avenues, the mansion. Will you exclaim in surprise, "What a game of chance! How many beautiful things have by accident come together!" Certainly not. You will say: all this is well devised and well arranged. It evinces much intelligence and much good taste. I shall add—it is a residence where Le Nostre has displayed all his genius and skill.* But then, what is this little parcel of land which the artist has so embellished, if the whole earth is but an atom suspended in the skies, and if you believe what I shall now tell you? You stand, Lucilius, somewhere on this atom; you must needs be very little, for you occupy not much room on it; yet you have eyes, which are two imperceptible points. Open these towards the sky. What do you perceive there? The moon at full? She is beautiful and very bright, though only by reflection from the sun. She appears as large as the sun, larger than the planets and than any star. But be not deceived by appearances. The moon is comparatively ex-

* The author refers to Chantilly, the seat of the Condé family.

ceeding small. Its nearness alone makes it appear so large. It has but a very small orbit as compared with that in which our earth revolves. Yet the moon travels eighty times more swiftly than sound—than the report of a cannon or of thunder. But then, compare the moon with the sun, as to magnitude and distance. A million of our earths together would not be greater than the sun. What then must be the sun's distance if we judge by its apparent size? Suppose a millstone falling from the sun to the earth. Give it the greatest velocity of which it is capable, it will need 114 years to reach our world. Be not alarmed, Lucilius. The distance of the remotest planets is vastly greater. The millstone would require, to fall from some of those to the earth, many more years than a millennium. What then shall be thought of the orbits of these planets? A fleet horse whose speed may be twenty-five miles per hour, must travel during more than 20,000 years to make the circuit of the orbit of Saturn.

I have not said all, Lucilius, as to the miracle of this visible universe, or, as you sometimes express it, these marvels of Chance,* which you regard as the sole first cause. This Chance [or destiny] is a workman more wondrous than you think. Be instructed further in the power of this Chance, who

* [Destiny?—EDIT.]

is your God. Do you know that those distances, from the earth to the sun and to the farthest planets, are so small compared with the distance from the earth to a fixed star, that here all comparison fails? A fixed star is as it were immensurable. If two observers, one on the earth, the other on the sun, looked at the same time on the same fixed star, the two visual lines of those two observers would not form a perceptible angle. If a man were placed on a fixed star, our sun and our earth and the ninety millions of miles between them would appear as one of the same point. Shall we be surprised that those stars, so vast in magnitude, appear to us but as sparks? May we not rather wonder, that from such an immensity of distance, they are visible by us at all? Here then am I upon this earth, as upon a grain of sand suspended in the skies, while a countless multitude of shining orbs, whose dimensions confound imagination, whose remoteness surpasses thought, surround this sand grain, and revolve in the vast amplitudes of heaven. I consider those innumerable orbs. They have no collisions or disorder. If the least of them should go astray, and interfere with our earth, what might not follow? But they continue in their exact order, and pursue their courses so tranquilly that no human ear discerns their movements. O marvellous sovereignty and

guidance of chance! So accurate and unerring their revolutions, that a minute creature confined to a corner of this vast universe has discovered a sure method of calculating in what point of their course those stars will be found even in distant ages. If it be by chance that they observe rules so invariable, then what is Order, what is regulation? Besides, I ask you what *is* chance? Is it body? Is it spirit? If the heavenly bodies ceased to move, would they cease to be bodies? But they do move, and this not of themselves or by their nature. We must therefore seek, Lucilius, a power or principle which causes them to move, and *so* to move. This when you find it, I call GOD. If you will suppose each of these vast moving bodies to be only a fortuitous assemblage of atoms, bound and linked together by their conformation and proximity, then I take one of these atoms and ask—who made it? Is it matter? Is it intellect? Had it the idea of itself before it made itself? Then it existed, at least a moment *before* it existed. It was, and it was not, at the same time. If it was the author of its being and mode of being, why did it choose to be matter and not spirit? Had it no beginning? Do you not make of this atom a *God*.*

* And of every atom in the vast planet, a God also? or did *that particular* atom, being a great God, create all the rest?—*EDIT.*

Yonder insect, barely visible, but which runs on my table, has eyes; if the slenderest straw be put across its path, it will run in a new direction. Are its retina and optic nerves the work of chance? Microscopic insects, 1000 times less, have an organization equally fine. Who has wrought these works so minute and delicate as to escape human sight? Is it not He who "made the stars also"?

. . . It is man who enjoys the sun, the stars, their influences, as he does the air he breathes and the earth on which he treads; and we can perceive the complete likelihood and fitness of this, since the heavens and all which they contain are no way comparable for dignity with the lowliest of mankind; the difference being that of matter incapable of feeling and knowing, and of mind, reason, intelligence. The whole world, if it is made for man, is really the least thing which God has made for him, as may be proved from the worth and truth of religion. It is not vanity or presumption for man to yield himself to the force of that truth. It would be stupidity and blindness not to avail himself of that which teaches him what he is and what he can become.—LA BRUYÈRE.

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Man's Weakness and God's Moral Government.

ALL in the works of nature is great and admirable. There is nothing which bears not the mark of its Divine Author. What is sometimes viewed as irregular and imperfect implies the reign of law and perfection. Vain and presumptuous men, you trample on the tiny worm which you despise. Now then create such another! You shudder at a scorpion. Make one if you can! I do not ask you to enter your studio and give life to a man of talent or commanding presence, or a beautiful woman: this would be much too hard a task; try only to make a hunchback or a monster. This will suffice. Kings, monarchs, potentates, have I named you by all your august names? Great ones of the earth, very high and puissant lords, we other men need for our harvest a little rain, or even somewhat less, a little dew: make us some dew we pray you; or send down on the ground some drops of water from the sky! Decoration, order, the effects and products of nature are generally understood; the causes and principles of things not at all. Ask a lady how it is that a fine eye has only to open itself in order to see; or ask a man of learning the same.

Billions of years, nay, all the cycles of duration, *are but as* an instant compared with God's eternity;

universal space is but a point, compared to His immensity. What then is the course of man's mortal life—what this grain of dust called the earth, what that little portion of it which a man possesses or occupies? The wicked prosper while they live. *Some* of them, I admit, do so. Virtue on earth is oppressed and crime unpunished. *Sometimes*, I confess, it is so. You say this is an injustice. Not at all. To justify that conclusion, you must prove that the wicked are absolutely happy; that virtue is not so: that crime remains in every sense unpunished. You must at least prove that this short time in which the good suffer and the wicked prosper, will have a long continuance; and also that what we term prosperity and fortune is not a false seeming, a vanishing shadow; and that this earth, this atom, where it appears that virtue and crime seldom receive their due fruits, is the only spot in the creation where penalties or recompenses are awarded.—LA BRUYÈRE.

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Wisdom of a Religious Life.

WHATEVER false notions or shameful neglect of what is in their power, may put men out of their way to happiness, and distract them, as we see, into so different courses of life, this yet is certain, that morality, established upon its true foundations, cannot but determine the choice in any one that will but consider; and he that will not be so far a rational creature as to reflect seriously upon infinite happiness and misery, must needs condemn himself, as not making that use of his understanding he should. The rewards and punishments of another life which the Almighty has established as enforcements of His law, are of weight to determine the choice, against whatever pleasure or pain this life can show, even when the eternal state is considered in its bare possibility, which nobody can make any doubt of. He that will allow exquisite and endless happiness to be but the possible consequence of a good life here, or the contrary state, the possible reward of a bad one, must own himself to judge very much amiss, if he does not conclude that a virtuous life, with the certain expectation of everlasting bliss, which *may* come, is to be preferred to a vicious one, with the fear of that dreadful state of misery which it *is very* possible may overtake the guilty; or at

least the terrible, uncertain hope of annihilation. This is evidently so, although the virtuous life here had nothing but pain, and the vicious continual pleasure; which yet is for the most part quite otherwise, and wicked men have not much the odds to brag of, even in their present possession; nay, all things rightly considered, have, I think, even the worse part here. But when infinite happiness is put in one scale, against infinite misery in the other; if the worst that comes to the pious man, if he mistake, be the best that the wicked can attain to if he be in the right, who can, without madness, run the venture? Who in his wits would choose to come within a possibility of infinite misery, which, if he miss, there is yet nothing to be got by that hazard? Whereas, on the other side, the sober, sane, or right-judging man ventures nothing against infinite happiness, to be got if his expectation comes to pass. If the good man be in the right, he is eternally happy; if he mistake he is not miserable, he feels nothing. On the other side, if the wicked be in the right, he is not happy; if he mistake, he is infinitely miserable. Must it not be a most manifest wrong judgment that does not presently see to which side in this case the preference is to be given?

I have forborne to mention anything of the certainty or probability of a future state, designing

here to show the wrong judgment that any one must allow he makes upon his own principles laid how he pleases, who prefers the short pleasures of a vicious life upon any consideration, whilst he knows, and cannot but be certain, that a future life is at least possible.—LOCKE.

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Christian Safety.

I HAVE seen young and unskilful persons sitting in a little boat, when every little wave sporting about the sides of the vessel, and every motion and dancing of the barge seemed a danger, and made them cling fast upon their fellows; and yet all the while they were as safe as if they sat under a tree, while a gentle wind shook the leaves into a refreshment and a cooling shade. And (so) the unskilful inexperienced Christian shrieks out whenever his vessel shakes, thinking it always a danger that the watery pavement is not stable and resident like a rock; and yet all his danger is in himself, none at all from without; for he is indeed moving upon the waters, but fastened to a rock; faith is his foundation, and hope his anchor, and death is his harbour, and Christ his pilot, and heaven his country; and all the evils of poverty, *or* affronts of tribunals and evil judges, of fears

and sadder apprehensions, are but like the loud wind blowing from the right point, they make a noise and drive faster to the harbour; and if we do not leave the ship, and leap into the sea, quit the interests of religion and run to the securities of the world, cut our cables and dissolve our hopes, grow impatient, and hug a wave and die in its embraces,—we are as safe at sea, safer in the storm which God sends us, than in a calm when we are befriended with the world.

JEREMY TAYLOR (BP.).

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Christ, Thoughts of, Inadequate and Narrow.

IN my heart rules alone, and ought to rule, one grand and single principle, namely, faith in my dear Lord Christ, ever the sole beginning, middle, and end of all spiritual and godly thoughts, which I have by day or night. But, nevertheless, I feel that I attain only to a small and weak attempt, scarcely and scantily, towards the height and depth and breadth of this measureless incomprehensible wisdom and love; that I have hardly gathered some little morsels and fragments from that vast most invaluable mine and treasure.—LUTHER.

The Friendship of Christ.

WHATSOEVER there is or can be desirable in friend, is in Christ, and that to the highest degr that can be desired. Would you choose for friend a person of great dignity? It is a thi taking with men to have those for their frien who are much above them, because they look up themselves honoured by the friendship of suc Thus, how taking would it be with some inferi maiden to be the object of the dear love of son great and excellent prince. But Christ is infinite above you, and above all the princes of the earth for He is the King of kings. So honourable person as this offers Himself to you in the neare and dearest friendship. And would you choose have a friend not only great but good? In Chri infinite greatness and infinite goodness me together, and receive lustre and glory from on another. His greatness is rendered lovely by Hi goodness. The greater any one is without good ness, so much the greater evil; but when infinit goodness is joined with greatness, it renders it glorious and adorable greatness. So, on the othe hand, His infinite goodness receives lustre fron His greatness. He that is of great understandin and ability, and is withal of a good and excellen *disposition*, is deservedly more esteemed than

lower and lesser being, with the same kind inclination and goodwill. Indeed goodness is excellent in whatever subject it be found; it is beauty and excellency itself, and renders all excellent that are possessed of it; and yet most excellent when joined with greatness. The very same excellent qualities of gold render the body in which they are inherent more precious and of greater value when joined with greater than when with lesser dimensions. And how glorious is the sight, to see Him who is the great Creator and supreme Lord of heaven and earth, full of condescension, tender pity, and mercy, towards the mean and unworthy! His almighty power and infinite majesty and self-sufficiency render His exceeding love and grace the more surprising. And how do His condescension and compassion endear His majesty, power, and dominion, and render those attributes pleasant that would otherwise be only terrible!

Would you not desire that your friend, though great and honourable, should be of such condescension and grace, and so to have the way opened to free access to him, that his exaltation above you might not hinder your free enjoyment of his friendship? And would you choose not only that the infinite greatness and majesty of your friend should be, as it were, mollified and sweetened with condescension and grace; but would you also

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gospel is to bring us to make God the object
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inclination in the creature not only to the ado
ation of a Lord and Sovereign, but to complacenc
in some one as a friend, to love and delight in so
one that may be conversed with as a companio
And virtue and holiness do not destroy or weak
this inclination of our nature. But so hath Go

contrived in the affair of our redemption, that a Divine Person may be the object even of this inclination of our nature. And in order hereto, such an one is come down to us, and has taken our nature, and is one of us, and calls Himself our Brother, Friend, and Companion.

Is it not enough in order to invite and encourage you to free access to a Friend so great and high, that He is one of infinite condescending grace, and also has taken your own nature, and is become man? But would you, further to embolden and win you, have Him a man of wonderful meekness and humility? Why, such an one is Christ! He is not only become man for you, but far the meekest and most humble of all men, the greatest instance of these sweet virtues that ever was or will be. And beside these, He has all other human excellencies in the highest perfection. These indeed are no proper addition to His Divine excellencies. Christ has no more excellency in His person since His incarnation than He had before, for Divine excellency is infinite, and cannot be added to. Yet His human excellencies are additional *manifestations* of His glory and excellency unto us, and are additional recommendations of Him to our esteem and love, who are of finite comprehension. Though His human excellencies are but *communications* and reflections of His

Divine, and though this light as reflected falls infinitely short of the Divine fountain of light in its immediate glory, yet the reflection shines not without its proper advantages, as presented to our view and affection. The glory of Christ, in the qualifications of His human nature, appears to us in excellencies that are of our own kind, and exercised in our own way and manner, and so in some respects are peculiarly fitted to invite our acquaintance and draw our affection. The glory of Christ, as it appears in its Divinity, though far brighter, more dazzles our eyes, and exceeds the strength of our sight or our comprehension; but as it shines in the human excellencies of Christ, it is brought more to a level with our conceptions, and made suitable to our nature and manner, yet retaining a semblance of the same Divine beauty, and a savour of the same Divine sweetness. But as both Divine and human excellencies meet together in Christ, they set off and recommend each other to us. It tends to endear the Divine majesty and holiness of Christ to us, that these are attributes of one in our nature, one of us, who is become our Brother, and is the meekest and humblest of men. It encourages us to look upon these Divine perfections, however high and great; since we have some near concern in, and liberty fully to enjoy *them*.—JONATHAN EDWARDS.

Christian Sincerity.

To steer our course right between the pretence of invincible infirmity and the boast of absolute perfection, we must keep in that safe middle-path of unfeigned sincerity, which will neither charge the condition of nature as being utterly incorrigible, that cannot be reduced to obedience, no not by the power of the Spirit of God, nor cast it upon God Himself, as being unwilling or not caring that nature should be thus reduced and brought under the obedience of Christ; but a man will charge *himself* in all his miscarriages, and hold it his duty (such also as by God's assistance he may perform, if he be not wanting on his part) to "yield his members as instruments of righteousness unto God." For sincerity implying a faithful purpose and will of doing what is right, Christ has hereby won the castle or fort of his enemy; and all the ammunition and engines therein will certainly then be used for right designs. The eyes which before imbibed corruptive thoughts from false alluring objects, are now made inlets of the light and brightness of the unspotted wisdom of God, fairly portrayed in the visible creature. Those ears that could drink in with delight the smooth tales of detraction and calumny, stand now open only to the *sighs* of the poor, or honest

reports of our neighbour. Those feet that were swift to inflict wrong, are now much more eager to rescue the innocent. Those hands that before were exercised in griping or over-reaching others, are now open for almsdeeds and bountiful distribution to the needy. That tongue which in secret would not spare to strike his friend, will now, in a just cause, defend his enemy. In brief, there is no external action of true sanctity and righteousness, but the sincere Christian both believes and finds he has power (by God's help) to perform it, and therefore does constantly the good and refuses the evil that his conscienee tells him is so indeed, and is in his power to do or to refrain: *i.e.* he will be sure to refrain from whatsoever is unjust, he never deals with another otherwise than himself would be dealt with, he will most certainly abstain from extortion, adultery, fornication; he will never do any envious or revengeful actions. And not only so, but he does believe that through the grace of God he may be quite devoid of envy and malice, and not so much as bear any ill will against any man, no, not against his enemies; and the same of all other inordinate affections, which though they move strongly and rebelliously, yet he never assents so far as to be willing to yield to them, though he had a secure opportunity thereof. And *yet* he does not think himself perfect, though he

thus assents to no sin while he thinks it so; nor doubts of his salvation, though he be imperfect. And if by the importunity of a temptation, or some unavoidable inadvertency, he falls into any evil action, the pleasure he finds from it, will be like that which a child gets by falling with his forehead against sharp stones, or with his hands into the fire. Wherefore his sincere love to righteousness and hearty abhorrence from sin will make him always circumspect. For he holds himself bound not only not to commit sin when it appears to be so, but charges himself with a perpetual watchfulness, that he may not commit it when it would insinuate itself under some more specious shape. And though by Divine assistance, and faithful adhesion thereto, he finds himself arrived to that pitch that he hath conquered all corruptions, so that he cannot charge himself with either pride, or impurity, or envy, or covetousness, or any such like vice, or that he misbelieves the promises of God, or does not depend upon His providence, or is not willing to submit to His will in all things, to whatever condition He shall call him; yet knowing himself withal not infallible, nor unconquerable, especially without the assistance of Christ, as also actually beset with many inconveniencies of human nature—such as are straying of thoughts, unevenness in devotion, indisposed-

ness of mind by reason of this tabernacle of earth we live in—and reflecting on the old reckoning of the follies of our life past, which nothing but ignorance can conceit to have been without sin, and how all these things (though ordinary philosophy pronounces them to be no faults but mere infirmities of nature), having been contracted by our lapse, may justly by religion be set on our score,—this sincere Christian whose character I have given, will be so far from scorning or slighting the person of Christ, His passion, intercession, and holy priesthood, that he will with the greatest reverence love and adore Him, and will not quit that sweet repose of mind he finds in recounting with himself what an inestimable friend he has with God, for all the pleasures and greatest interests of this present life; nor presume to be justified by his own life or works, but by faith in Christ, whom he rejoices to think that he shall see his Judge at the last day.

This is the true and sound completion of a sincere Christian, and he that does not faithfully endeavour to arrive at this state, discovers himself to be a halting hypocrite, and one that is no lover of the Divine life, nor has tasted the sweetness of sanctity, and of the Holy Spirit of God, nor known the power of His operations. He that *pretends* to be above it, he is self-condemned.

HENRY MORE (DR.).

Christianity, how treated by the Jews.

GOD has declared that a new covenant should be instituted, and that this should be for the light of the Gentiles; we also see, and have examined and are persuaded,* that by the name of Jesus Christ the Crucified, men come from idols and other iniquities unto God, and maintain even to death their confession and their piety. By these works and the power which attends them, it is possible for all to understand that this is the new law and the new covenant and the fulfilled expectation of those who, from all the nations, waited for good things from God. For, the true Israel, and children of Abraham, whose faith was testified of God, who was blest and called the father of many nations, *are we;* and through this Christ crucified, are we brought near to God. Isaiah hath said, "Hear and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the *peoples*, a leader and lawgiver to the nations. Behold, the nation whom thou knewest not, thou shalt call, and the nation who knew not thee shall run unto thee, for the sake of Jehovah thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel,

* The reading is doubtful: πεπύσμεθα or πεπείσμεθα. Both are here combined.—EDIT.

for he hath glorified thee."* But you (the Jewish nation) have dishonoured the Divine appointment and made light of the new and holy covenant; neither do ye now receive it nor turn from your evil way: for your eyes are closed, your ears are dull, your hearts are gross, and so ye hear not. The Lawgiver is here, and ye see not. The poor are evangelized, the blind receive their sight, and you understand not. You need a second circumcision; yet you glory in your flesh. The new law would have you sabbatise continually, but you, idling through the one (Sabbath) day, think yourselves devout, not considering for what ends it was commanded you. So if you eat unleavened bread, ye say ye have fulfilled the will of God. But not by these observances is the Lord our God well pleased. If any one among you be perjured, or a thief, let him be so no more; if any one an adulterer, let him be converted: thus will he have sabbatised the true and joyful Sabbath of God; if any one has not clean hands, let him wash and be clean. For Isaiah verily did not send you to a bath that you should there wash away murder and other sins, which not all the water of the sea would be sufficient to cleanse; but we conclude that this was of old the saving bath which followed them that repented; and

* Isa. lv. 4, 5.

that they are cleansed not by the blood of goats and sheep, or* the ashes of a heifer, or offering of fine flour, but by faith through the blood of Christ and His death, who died for that end; as Isaiah said, "The Lord hath made bare His holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God."—"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed." Thus by the washing of conversion and the knowledge of God, which, as Isaiah proclaims, took place for the sins of God's peoples, we have believed and know that this baptism which he foretold, which is alone able to purify the converted, this is the water of life. But the cisterns which you have digged for yourselves are quite broken, and of no use to you. For what is the profit of that baptism which cleanses or brightens (*φαιδρύνει*) the flesh and body only? Baptize the soul from wrath, from covetousness, from envy, from hatred, and lo, the the body is clean. Thus the symbolical meaning of the unleavened bread is that ye may not work the old works of the evil leaven. But you understand all things carnally; and think it piety, if, while observing these outward forms, your souls

* Heb. x. 4.

are laden with deceit and all wickedness. . . . Other nations are not chargeable with such injustice toward Christ and us, as you are, who are the authors to them of a wicked prejudice against that just One, and us who are His. For after ye had crucified Him, the alone blameless and just man, from whose stripes there is healing for all who come to God by Him; when ye knew that He had risen from the dead and ascended into heaven as the prophets had foretold should happen, not only did ye not repent of the evils ye had wrought, but, selecting chosen men from Jerusalem, sent them out into all the earth, affirming that an impious sect, the Christians, had appeared; uttering against us those things which whoever are ignorant of us believe. So that you not only are the authors of iniquity among yourselves, but also in truth among all men besides.* I will remind you however of a prophecy which shows how even to those destitute of the knowledge of God, that is, the Gentiles (who having eyes saw not, and had no heart to understand, who worshipped idols

* Eusebius refers to the same conduct, "We find (he says) in the writings of the ancients, that the priests and elders of the Jewish nation, who dwelt at Jerusalem, wrote letters which they sent to the Jews abroad in all countries, traducing the doctrine of Christ as a new and strange heresy, and exhorting them not to embrace it."—EUSEB. Quoted in *Lardner*, vol. iii. p. 487.

made by art), the word foretold that they should deny these, and should hope in this Messiah. For said Isaiah, "Behold, your God will come with a recompense; He will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert." As a fountain of living water from God, in the desert of the nations who knew not God, has this Messiah come forth, of your own kindred, and healed those who from their birth were blind and deaf and lame, causing by His word this one to leap, and that to hear, and another to see, and having raised the dead and restored them to life, by these works He constrained men of that day to acknowledge Him. But they [the Jews] even seeing those things done, said that it was a magical (phantasm) illusion; for they dared to call Him a magician and a deceiver of the people. But He did these things to persuade those who should believe on Him, that whomsoever has suffered bodily mutilation, but is a vigilant keeper of His sayings, him will He raise up, at His second advent, made quite whole, and moreover deathless and painless and incorruptible.—JUSTIN MARTYR.

Nature of Christian Liberty.

INDIFFERENCY to an object is the lowest degree of liberty, and supposes unworthiness or defect in the object, or in the apprehension. But the will is then the freest and most perfect in its operation, when it entirely pursues a good with so certain determination and clear election, that the contrary evil cannot come into dispute or pretence. Such in our proportions is the liberty of the sons of God. It is a holy and amiable captivity to the Spirit. The will of man is in love with those chains which draw us to God, and loves the fetters that confine us to the pleasures and religion of the kingdom. And as no man will complain that his temples are restrained, and his head is prisoner, when it is encircled with a crown, so when the Son of God had made us free, and hath only subjected us to the service and dominion of the Spirit, we are as free as princes within the circles of their diadem, and our chains are bracelets, and the law is a law of liberty, and His service is perfect freedom, and the more we are subject, the more we shall reign as kings, and the faster we run, the easier is our burden, and Christ's yoke is like feathers to a bird, not loads, but helps to motion; without them the body falls.

JEREMY TAYLOR (BP.).

The Growth of Christianity a proof of its Miracles.

THAT the Lord Jesus, and His disciples in His name, wrought visibly such works as exceed all powers of nature—in the wonderful cures of sickness, in the raising of the dead, in the stilling of tempests, and (what is more wonderful) the sudden inspiration of human minds, so that unlearned and simple men were by the Holy Spirit filled with the highest wisdom, and attained, with a deep knowledge of the ancient Scriptures, the faculty of using foreign tongues,—that all those things, I say, were done by the Lord Jesus and after Him by His followers—the subsequent effects evidently show; namely, that not by force of arms, not by the allurement or promise of licentious pleasures, but by the rude and simple disciples of Christ, who were but a few, opposed to the unheard-of tyranny and rage of persecutors, Heathen and Jewish, multitudes of the unlettered and even some of the wisest Greeks and Romans (despising that idol worship which had before so attracted them, that the heathen had never been reclaimed from it by Moses or the prophets, while the Jews in general were bitterly averse from Christ although His great miracles had been seen by them), were yet converted, with the most

earnest affection, to the faith of the Lord Jesus. In that faith, moreover, truths are declared which transcend all human understanding; by it the carnal indulgences which mortals covet are forbidden; things invisible are enjoined to be laboriously pursued, and worldly things to be contemned; with all which it is the greatest miracle for mortal minds to comply, and a manifest sign of Divine inspiration and suggestion. And that this was not the result of fortune or chance but of Divine ordination, is from hence further manifest, that the Almighty had, ages before, foretold by the voices of His prophets, that He would accomplish it: on all which the apostle to the Hebrews excellently comments, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him; God also bearing witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will."

The wondrous conversion of the world to the Christian faith, is a most certain indication of the past miracles and signs which have been recorded, Nor, as I judge, should it be lightly passed over, that to deny Christ's miracles involves a greater miracle; for it would be than all signs and *miracles* more marvellous, that the world should

be drawn away from its vices and delights to believe things so exalted, to perform things so difficult, to hope for things so lofty and so hidden, above all should be drawn from that error of idolatry in which it was engulfed; in brief, that being what it was, it should be turned to such a religion, and by such simple men.*—RAIMOND MARTINI.

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Christian Love.

LOVE all who love [God in Christ] your Friend. What tends to keep you apart is not to be compared with what should knit you together. The points on which you differ are not to be compared with the points on which you are agreed. Forget inconsistencies, surface-errors, and infirmities, and love whatever of God you see in them. Temper, sect, party, prejudice, uncouth address, may in occasional instances make the love you wish to be a flow, an effort of principle. Still love them. Angels do: "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister unto such as shall be heirs of salvation?" And have you a more delicate moral sense than the pure angels of glory? Love them, for God so loves them as to call them His friends.—STANFORD (REV. C.).

* Ipse talis ad talia, à talibus et tam simplicibus hominibus.

Contentment, the Study of

SINCE all the evil in the world consists in the disagreeing between the object and the appetite, as when a man hath what he desires not, or desires what he hath not, or desires amiss,—he that composes his spirit to the present accident, hath variety of instances (occasions) for his virtue; but none to trouble him, because his desires enlarge not beyond his present fortune; and a wise man is placed in the variety of chances, like the nave or centre of a wheel in the midst of all the circumvolutions and changes of posture, without violence or change, save that it turns gently in compliance with its changed parts, and is indifferent which part is up or which is down; for there is some virtue or other to be exercised whatever happens, either patience or thanksgiving, love or fear, moderation or humility, charity or contentedness. It conduces much to our content, if we pass by those things which happen to our trouble, and consider that [remaining to us] which is pleasing and prosperous; that by the representation of the better, the worse may be blotted out. It may be thou art entered into the cloud which will bring a gentle shower to refresh thy sorrows. I am fallen into the hands of publicans and *sequestrators*, and they have taken all from me.

What now? Let me look about me. They have left me the sun and moon, fire and water, a loving wife, and many friends to pity me, and some to relieve me; and I can still discourse; and unless I list, they have not taken away my merry countenance and my cheerful spirit, and a good conscience: they still have left me the providence of God, and all the promises of the gospel, and my religion, and my hopes of heaven, and my charity to them too; and still I sleep and digest, I eat and drink, I read and meditate, I can walk in my neighbour's pleasant fields, and see the varieties of natural beauties, and delight in all that in which God delights, that is, in virtue and wisdom, in the whole creation, and in God himself.

If thy coarse robe trouble thee, remember the swaddling clothes of Jesus; if thy bed be uneasy, yet it is not worse than His manger; and it is no sadness to have a thin table, if thou callest to mind that the King of heaven and earth was fed with a little milk; and yet besides this, suffered all the sorrows which we deserved.—JEREMY TAYLOR (BP.).

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Christian Exhortation.

THE lowly and submissive obedience of men so great and good as are borne witness of in Scripture, has made not only us but the generations before us better, who have received the Divine oracles in reverence and truth. Having therefore so many and great and glorious examples given us, let us run upward to the goal of peace which was from the beginning set before us; let us look intently to the Father and Creator of the whole world, and cleave to His magnificent and exceeding gifts and benefits of peace: let us behold Him by contemplation, and by the eye of the soul observe His long-suffering will: let us think how gentle and patient He is towards His whole creation. The heavens moving by His governance are subject to Him in peace. Day and night accomplish their ordained course, not encroaching on each other. The sun and moon and each chorus of the stars at His command fulfil their appointed circuits in concord, without any deviation. The fruit-bearing earth, according to His will, at its due seasons produces plenteous food for men and beasts and all things living, not reluctant, or changing anything decreed by Him. The unsearchable things of the abysses, and the unspeakable judgments of Hades, are controlled by the same command.

The depth of the unfathomed sea, according to His ordinance collected into masses, passes not the barriers which surround it, but as He hath enjoined it, obeys. For He said, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and here shall thy waves be broken." The vast ocean, and the worlds beyond it are governed by the same mandates of their Ruler. Spring and summer, autumn and winter, succeed each other in peace. The receptacles of the winds in due season fulfil their service without destructive violence. The ever-flowing fountains formed for health and pleasure, pour without fail their streams to sustain the life of man.—All these hath the great Creator and Lord of all commanded to be in peace and concord, granting benefits to all, but exceeding abundantly to us, who have taken refuge in His compassions, through our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and majesty for ever and ever. Amen. See to it, beloved, that His benefits which are so many, be not to us for condemnation, unless, walking worthy of Him, we do with one accord those things which are good and well-pleasing in His sight: for it is said, "The Spirit of the Lord is a candle searching out the inmost parts." Let us discern how near He is to us, and that not one of our thoughts and reasonings is concealed from Him. It is our duty therefore, not to desert from our *ranks* by departing from His will.

Let us offend foolish and senseless men, lifted up and boastful in the pride of their reason, rather than offend God. Let us venerate the Lord Jesus Christ whose blood was given for us; let us respect them that are set over us, let us honour the elders, and instruct the young in the discipline and fear of God. Our wives let us guide to what is good, that they may show forth an amiable habit of holiness and sincere purpose of meekness. Let them manifest by silence the moderation of the tongue, and their love be without partiality, rendered alike to all that devoutly fear God. Let your children partake of the instruction which is in Christ; let them learn how much humility has power with God, and how much a holy charity avails with Him, how good and great His fear is, saving all that commune with Him devoutly in a pure mind. For He is the searcher of our thoughts and counsels; whose breath is in us, and when He wills He taketh it away. All these the faith which is in Christ confirms. Our all-merciful and beneficent Father has compassions for them that fear Him, and bestows His graces gently and benignly on all that come unto Him with a simple mind. Therefore let us not waver nor fluctuate in mind as to His most excellent and glorious gifts. That be far from us which is written, "Wretched are the *double*-minded, doubtful in heart, who say—These

things we heard from our fathers, and lo we have grown old and none of them has happened."

O thoughtless ones, observe the tree—the vine; having dropt its leaves, then comes the bud, then the leaf, then the blossom, after this the unripe, and at length the ripened grape. You see that in a short time the fruit of the tree comes to maturity. So in truth quickly and suddenly His will shall be accomplished, the Scripture moreover testifying, "The Lord shall come quickly and shall not tarry, He shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Holy One whom ye look for."—CLEMENS ROMANUS.

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Self-scrutiny.

To whom should you be patient, if not to the weak? To whom placable or forgiving, if not to the offender? To whom magnanimous, if not to the mean or depressed? Learn to know yourself! Inquire—Am I not patient just only so long and no longer than I see no weak person before me? Am I not only so long reconcileable as I am not offended? And just so long magnanimous as while no mean or abject person presents himself? —LAVATER.

Good Works enjoined.

LET us consider how all the righteous have been adorned with good works; the Lord Himself, adorning Himself with His works, rejoiced. Having therefore this exemplar let us diligently adhere to His will, and with our whole strength work the work of righteousness. The good workman with confidence receives bread for his work, while the sluggish and remiss cannot meet the eye of his employer. We must therefore be of a ready mind in well-doing; for from Him are all things. And thus He forewarns us: "Behold, the Lord cometh, and His reward is with Him, to render to every one according to his work." He exhorts us, therefore, with all His heart as to this, that we be not idle and negligent in any good work. Let our boasting and confidence be in Him; let us be obedient to His will; let us consider how the whole multitude of His angels stand to fulfil His pleasure. Wherefore let us, coming together conscientiously with one accord, as with one mouth cry earnestly unto Him, that we may be partakers of His great and glorious promises. For eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into man's heart, what God hath prepared for them that wait for Him.* How blessed and how wonderful, be-

* Isa. lxiv. 4.

loved, are the gifts of God! Life in immortality, splendour in righteousness, truth with freedom, faith with assurance, temperance in sanctity; and all these things are subjected to our understanding. What therefore must be the things prepared for them that wait for Him? The all-holy Creator and Father of worlds Himself knows the magnitude and beauty of them. Let us therefore intently strive to be found in the number of those who wait for Him, that we may share the promised gifts. But how shall this be done, beloved? By fixing our minds in faith on God, by seeking the things pleasing and acceptable unto Him, by doing what is conformable to His perfect will; following in the way of truth, casting off all injustice and iniquity, covetousness, strife, malice, and deceit, whisperings, evil-speakings, enmity to God, pride and boastfulness, vain glory, inhospitality. For they who do such things [and cherish such habits] are hateful to God, and not only they but such as approve of those who do so.

This is the way, beloved, in which we find our salvation, even Jesus Christ the High-Priest of our offerings, the guardian and helper of our weakness. Through Him let us look earnestly to the heights of heaven; and behold as in a mirror His spotless and exalted countenance. Through Him the eyes of the heart have been opened,

through Him our foolish and darkened understanding is renewed into His marvellous light. Through Him the Lord hath willed that we should taste immortal knowledge, who being the Brightness of His glory is by so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. . . . To whom He saith, Sit thou on my right hand till I make thy enemies thy footstool. Who then are the Lord's enemies? The wicked, who oppose their wills to the will of God. Let us therefore war, men and brethren, with all earnestness, at His blameless command. Let us consider those who are soldiers under [earthly] leaders, how orderly, how strenuously, how obediently, they fulfil the commands. All are not chiefs or chiliarchs or centurions—but each in his own rank performs the orders of the sovereign and the commanders. The great cannot be without the little, nor the little without the great; but there is a combination of all, and in that is utility. Observe our body; the head without the feet is nothing; so the feet without the head: the smallest members of our body are needful and useful to the whole, and all conspire and are jointly subject for its preservation.

Let, therefore, our whole body be saved in Christ Jesus, and let each be subject to his neighbour, according as he has been placed by the gift of

God. Let not the strong despise the weak, let the weak respect the strong; let the rich relieve the poor, and the poor bless God that He has given him one by whom his need may be supplied. Let the wise show his wisdom, not in words but in good works. Let the humble not bear witness to himself, but leave it to another to bear witness of him. Let the pure not be vain-glorious, knowing that another bestowed on him the gift of purity. Let us consider, therefore, brethren, of what we were made, and who and of what kind we came into the world as out of a sepulchre and darkness. He who made and formed us brought us into His world, having previously prepared His bounties for us, even before we had a being. Wherefore having received all from Him, we ought in all to give thanks to Him, unto whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.—CLEMENS ROMANUS.

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Glory of the Cross of Christ.

WHEN unbelievers can destroy the proofs that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, they may fitly regard His cross as an object of contempt; but while they must leave these proofs complete, His cross will but serve to make us more acquainted with His greatness; and we shall not only say that this death was voluntary, and that it had been predicted, but we shall show further that it is as a mirror which displays to us all the virtues of man and all the attributes of God. You will find there the patience of One who suffers on behalf of His fellow-men, and of those who ought to be His servants and disciples; the charity of One who prays for those inflicting death upon Him; the fortitude of a man who bears the burden of all men's iniquities; the constancy of One without sin, who is assailed, so to speak, at once by the fury of men and by the justice of God. We see there the master-piece of Divine wisdom, since we find the aims of the foes of our salvation defeated, and the purposes of God succeeding, in spite of the schemes of men; the propitiation for sin accomplished by means of the most execrable parricide which was ever committed or conceived; the synagogue buried, as it were, in the tomb of Him whom it put to death to defend its privileges; the Romans

consecrating the King who is to rule all nations, even when they give Him a reed for a sceptre; Jesus Christ dying, followed by unnumbered martyrs willing to die in imitation of Him, vanquishing the world by His ignominy, crucifying the flesh by the preaching of His cross, and by His agonies carrying repose and peace into the souls of the departing. We rightly believe, also, that the justice and the tender mercy of God there appear in their full light. What victim could so exhibit the hatred of God to sin? What gift to men could so make known to men the love of God towards them? Infidelity, then, reproaches us with the meanness or ignominy of an object, where, in truth, the virtues of man, and the moral attributes of God are alike concentrated, and, as it were, enthroned.—ABBADIE.

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Value of Remission of Sins. Christian Joy.

We ought not to incline to bring down revealed religion to the measures of natural religion; nor even take it for granted that that always most deserves our regard in the former, which is common to it with the latter. Earnestness on this side may indeed be expedient, when we have to combat the perversions of misinformed zealots; but, in general, it is certain that while those things in our religion which are parts of the common religion of nature can never be lost or suppressed, what it has of its own *may*, and is naturally in danger so to be. Rather, therefore, if the gospel does contain anything peculiar, let us resolve to try what salutary virtue there may be in this peculiarity, for certainly it was not added in vain. Particularly let us look well into the mediatorial scheme. And since remission of sins is represented as the more special and excellent blessing derived to us from the Mediator, let us inquire whether we are duly acquainted with its great value, power, and extent; the most desirable proof of which will be, if we, like the ancient believers, enjoy an inward peace and confidence towards God in the sense of that remission; a peace, as they describe it, which passes all understanding. But if this may seem too confined, let us, however,

in some respect or other, be filled by the word of the gospel with a Divine joy in believing; a joy whose praise and value will not so much be, that it can sometimes prove its greatness by raptures or transports, as that it implies when there appears less of these, a clear, strong, and uniform kind of consciousness notwithstanding, of our being unspeakably happy through the grace of the gospel, and redeemed from the miseries of a sinful state. To feel more or less this effect in general, I mean joy, is plainly incumbent on us, if the gospel be the same now as it was in the beginning; and if we also are to be moved and to act by the real and proper principles of Christianity. If therefore we are sensible of no such impressions from the New Testament, but can read or hear it with the same coolness and indifference as a piece of philosophy, I do not know how we can prove to ourselves that we apprehend it, even so much as in the right sense; for the right sense and view seems to be connected with great joy. The thing itself is of such a nature: "Behold," says the angel, "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." And yet, is it not a common case, to be able to read the New Testament with approbation, more or less, of the judgment and understanding; nay, perhaps with reverent impressions of heart, with some concern

and devotion, and yet not properly with joy, but rather a secret uneasiness and dejection? Nor do I see how a sincere person, when he reflects upon this, can do otherwise than wonder what should be the cause of it; why the gospel, which was conceived to be so comfortable a thing at the first preaching of it, should be to him heavy and foreign in some parts of it, painful and discouraging in others, and upon the whole affording more of check than comfort. The true cause certainly lies here: that Christianity was intended to be, and accordingly was understood by the first hearers of it, under a different turn of view; and with such an order within itself, as made it appear to them a dispensation still fuller of a marvellous and effectual kindness, bounty, and condescension, than it commonly does to us. Could we conceive things in this true state, and genuine connection of them, there would be no need of those suspicions which usually and with some reason arise within us, when grace or faith, when joy or feeling are mentioned. Salvation by grace would be then perfectly rational, sure of the best effects, and self-guarded from all abuses.

Indeed, why should we be afraid to have our obedience flow more immediately from gratitude; while, at the same time, and by the same gospel, *the obligations* of hope and fear lie upon us too,

and are in as full force as ever? Gratitude is a very strong principle, carrying with it a readiness and diligence in the performance of our whole duty; and if the mercy we are thankful for be no less than such a state of salvation and acceptance with God already, that we can pray for nothing more and intend nothing more by our good actions, than "to continue the same to our life's end," our obedience will be generous, and as near as need be to disinterested. And if it was in and under the remission of sins that we were admitted to all this, and therefore the character of pardoned sinners is to be a standing one, and the affections that belong to it perpetual in us, this will, above all things, preserve us in such a humility as cannot otherwise be conceived. To say nothing of our special love of Christ, since He being the Author of all and therefore the object of such continual reliance, contemplation, and remembrance, this must needs create in us a kind of personal affection toward Him our great benefactor, such as will again render all our service of, and regards to Him in a Christian life, the more sensible and lively. So innocent and free from any but good tendencies is that tenor and state of things implied by grace. As innocent is that temper of mind for which we are forced to use words which might seem to make it a mere business of passion;

but the joy we mean, is in truth such, that it can have no wild or improper consequences. For whatever degree of it a believer thus feels upon a right apprehension of things, it will never raise him above prudence and sobriety, above civil duty or decency, but only above vice and all that is base and unworthy: nor will it be to him instead of a good life, but a most powerful instrument to assist him to such a life. In fine, to rejoice rightly, with a confidence and a lowliness of mind entirely reconcileable, is indeed a great thing; whether we are induced to it from the general terms of that salvation which was purchased for us, or whether by acknowledging specially that Fountain of so many mercies and dawn of joy to poor mankind, the Word's being made flesh and being born of a virgin, whereby He both honoured and saved our frail nature which He assumed, and blessed us with His presence by tabernacling among us.—GAMBOLD (*Moravian Bishop*).

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God's Happiness.

In our Holy Scriptures blessedness is often ascribed to God. He is ever-blessed in Himself. If God has in Himself the fulness of perfection and satisfaction, our souls surely may find satisfaction in Him. He has an infinite fulness of knowledge, comfort, and holiness; therefore surely enough to satisfy us, empty as we are. We need His teaching, how we may be blessed in His blessedness, how we may be conformed to the nature of God, and live the life of God, and then surely we shall be happy enough. However our prejudices darken it, yet the life of God cannot be a gloomy life. The belief that God is blessed will make us prize His word, for by that we are conformed to the nature and the life of God. When the word of God breaks in upon the heart, we pursue the same design with *Him*. Men are prejudiced against a course of holiness; it seems to look upon them with a sour and austere face. But doth He that made all things want true joy and contentment? Who should have happiness if God hath not? Now when we really love God's statutes we come to be conformed to His nature; we love what He loves and hate what He hates; and then we begin to live the life of God. This is the fruit of grace, to teach us *to live as God* lives, to do as God doth,

to love Him as our chiefest good, and to glorify Him as our utmost end. God is actively blessed with respect to us, as He is the fountain of all blessedness. He is not only blessedness itself, but willing to communicate and give it out to the creature, especially to His saints. These are vessels into which God is still pouring more, until they be completely filled. Now this communicativeness that is in God is a certain argument and encouragement to move us to seek grace to keep His statutes. Every good, the more good it is, the more it is diffusive of itself. And it is a part of God's goodness that He is still of the giving-hand: "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." The words indeed are not expressly found in any evangelist: but there we may see the whole drift of Christ's doctrine was to press men to give; it is a more blessed thing. This is the happiness of God, that He gives to all, and receives of none; that He is ready to communicate of His own fulness upon such free terms: "Of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace;" that is, grace for grace's sake. When God communicates Himself to us without anything between us and Him, when we are immediately present with Him and have immediate influences from Him, this is the happiness of heaven. In

he heavenly state God shall be all in all. He hall be both the dispenser and the dispensation. There we see Him face to face, and in His face nd presence is fulness of joy.

If we would enjoy the blessed God, we must ot only consult with His word, but with *Him:* othing else can draw us off from the world, and ersuade us to look after heavenly things. Nohing else will teach us the vanity of the creature, nd the reality of spiritual privileges. Until we ee these things in a Divine light, the heart hangs ff from God.—THOMAS MANTON, D.D.

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Christian Character, Usefulness of.

MASTERS! Mistresses! what spirit do you live in? Do you exhibit the image of Christ to those around ou? Remember, it is the Lord's delightful work o take the truth in living characters and plant it rom one bosom into another. The truth of God iving and glowing in the human heart is emiently calculated to arrest the attention of children nd servants.

Do you profess to be a son or daughter of the King of kings? Let your life prove it. Your ongue cannot of itself prove it. You must have wo arguments: your tongue and your life.—HOWELS.

Christian Charity.

In differences among professors of the Reformed Protestant religion, a man is to choose the best way, but to hold charity towards those who dissent. In the true Church, in matters of lesser moment there may be sundry differences. For till men have the same degree of light, it cannot be expected they should be all of a mind. Babes will think one thing; grown persons will have other apprehensions; sick persons will have their frenzies and doubtings, which the sound cannot like. The apostle's rule is, "Let us therefore as many as be perfect be thus minded, and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal this unto you." There are two parts of that rule. The perfect must be thus minded; they that are more fully instructed in the mind of God, must practice as they believe; strings in tune must not be brought down to those out of tune. But if others tainted with error do not give a thorough assent to all Divine truth, yet let us walk together (saith the apostle) so far as we are agreed. God, that has begun to enlighten them in other things, will in time discover their mistakes. Thus far true Christian charity takes place. Here we are agreed in the Christian reformed religion, in the *main* points of it; let us walk together so far, and

in lesser differences bear with and forbear one another in love.

What is bearing with one another? Not conniving at their sin, or neglecting ways to reclaim them, or forbearing our profession when God calls to it, but to restore them with meekness, to own them in those things wherein they are owned by God; not to practise that anti-Christian humour which is now got into Protestantism, of unchurching, unministering, unchristianing one another, but to own one another in all those things wherein we are agreed, without imposing or censuring; not endeavouring to destroy all, that we may promote the particular interest of one party to the prejudice of the whole, but walking under one common rule; and if others shall prove peevish, and angry brethren shall call us ill names, and disclaim us as not belonging to the same Father, we ought not to reject them, but still call them brethren; if they will not join with us, we cannot help it, yet they are brethren, notwithstanding that disclaimer; and how pettishly and frowardly soever they carry themselves in their differences, a good Christian should take up this resolution, though they may condemn things which Christ will own, to bear their reproofs, and love them still: for the iniquity of their carriage doth not take away *our obligation* to them. As in the

relation of inferiors we are bound to be obedient to the froward, as well as to the gentle parents and masters, so in the duties between equals we are to bear with the froward and overcome their inclinations. Though we have corruptions that are apt to alienate us, and put us upon angry passions, uncomely heats and divisions, yet God forbid we should omit any part of our duty to them; for uncharitable brethren are brethren still.—THOMAS MANTON, D.D.

God in the Heart.

INSTEAD of stretching our thoughts to the mystery of creation, and soaring above the stars when we think of God, which, for the most part, is setting Him at a distance, it may be of great use to consider Him as present in the room or little spot where we are, and, as it were, circumscribed within it, in all His glory, majesty, and purity. I need not envy any man his station or wish for a better spot on earth than where I am to find God in; He is found only in the heart, and in the heart everywhere and wherever He is found, He makes (or can make) a paradise. We ourselves stint God in the measure of spiritual gifts. He has no measure. —ADAM.

Forbearance as to others' Defects a Duty.

EACH believer, shine he ever so brightly, is at present sanctified but in part; need we wonder if, on some occasions, the splendour of his gifts and the radiancy of his graces suffer a temporary eclipse? At such times let our candour and forbearance have their perfect work. After a certain period he will emerge from the shade and beam forth in his usual lustre; and when the declining saint has sat his appointed time in darkness, the Lord will again be a light unto him. Happy is that benighted soul, whose faith (for it is the peculiar business of faith's eye to see in the dark) can pierce the gloom, anticipate the return of day, and long for a final approximation to the Sun of righteousness in that world of glory, where no more clouds or darkness shall obscure our views, tarnish our graces, or damp our joys, for ever. . . . A fellow-Christian or some conspicuous character may shine unregarded: but if his brightness become in any respect clouded or overcast, our telescopes are up, our eyes in full employ, our tongues proclaim his defects; and it is well if magnifying and multiplying glasses do not lend their aid.—TOPLADY.

Scoffs at true Religion must not turn from it.

A CHRISTIAN must not suffer himself to be out of his religion either in whole or in pa scorn or contempt cast upon us, should (from our obedience to God. We are l this temptation; for a holy life is apt to l a scorn by worldly men, and they that from iniquity are as owls among their nei Seriousness in religion is counted mopish melancholy. Self-denial, when, upon hope world to come, men grow dead to present and can hazard them for God, and can for for Christ, the world thinks this hum folly. To do all things by the prescrip word, and live upon the hopes of the u by them that would shape themselves to interests, counted madness. Zeal in a go is a good thing; but the world is wont good evil. As the astronomers call the stars by horrid names,—"the serpent dragon's tail," "the greater and lesser so the world is grossly guilty of misnamin will not be served in a cold and careless We are commanded to be fervent in spirit the Lord. But this will not suit with t and lazy pace which is called by th

temper and moderation. Holy singularity (as Noah was an upright man in a corrupt age), this, because they would have none to upbraid them in their sins, and to part ways, and the number of the godly is fewer, this they account a factious singularity in those who walk contrary to the stream of common examples.

Fervent devotion and earnest communing with God in humble prayer, is called imposture and enthusiasm. The world are little acquainted with those elevations and enlargements of the spirit, and though praying by the spirit be a great privilege (Jude 20; Rom. viii. 26), it is little relished by them. A dead, flat way of praying suits their taste better. Serious speaking of God and heavenly things is, in the phrase of the world, canting. Indeed to speak swelling words of vanity, or an unintelligible jargon, betrays religion to scorn; but a pure lip and speech, "seasoned with salt," and that holy things be spoken of in a holy manner, our Lord requires. Faith in the future eternal state is esteemed a fond credulity by those who affect the vanities, honours, and pleasures of the world. To live upon the hopes of a world unseen, and that to come, they judge to be but foppery and needless superstition. Thus do poor creatures, intoxicated with the delusions of the flesh, judge of the holy things of God. The

humility of Christians and their forgiving injuries, they account simplicity or stupidness. Exact walking is named scrupulosity and preciseness, which is a reproach that reflects contempt upon God Himself; when He hath made a law, and obedience to it is derided by professed Christians, the scorn must fall on Him who gave us these commands. If he be too precise who imperfectly obeys God, what will you say of God Himself, who commands more than any one of us all performs? Thus the children of God are reproached as hypocrites and derided as fools, and it is counted a part of wit and breeding to droll at the serious practice of godliness.

Such persons, though their own way in religion be but a sluggish, lazy, and dead course, yet have a high conceit of it, and censure all that is contrary, or but a degree removed above it. Christians complained in the primitive times that they were condemned unheard. And Tertullian saith, "they would not inquire, because they had a mind to hate." A man riding afar off, and seeing people dancing, might think they were demented, till he came near and saw the harmonious order. Besides this, the practice of Christians condemns the life which the worldly affect; and since they will not come to others by religious imitation, *they* seek to bring others down to themselves by

scoffs and censures. Such bitter words pierce deep. But they should not move us either to open defection or partial declining. Scoffers at godliness within the pale of the visible Church have the same Bible, baptism, creed; profess to believe the same God and Christ with those whom they oppose. The difference is, the one are real, the other merely nominal Christians; the one have a religion to talk of, the others to live by. A picture of Christ that is drawn by a painter they may like, but the image of God framed by the Spirit in the hearts of the faithful, and described in the lives of the sanctified, this they scorn and scoff at. They count the children of God foolish or deranged: but justly may the crimination be retorted; since their own way is madness and folly. They pour out their hearts to toils and trifles, neglect their main business—the one thing needful, and run up and down they know not why, like children that follow a soap-bubble till it dissolves. Surely we should deride their derisions, and contemn their contempt, who themselves neglect so great salvation. If they think us fools for preferring heaven before inconsiderable vanities, remember, they can no more judge of these things than a blind man of colours.

THOMAS MANTON, D.D.

Christian Friendship.

We imitate those whom we love, and with whom we often converse. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise." As a man that walks in the sunshine is tanned insensibly, and as Moses' face shined by converse with God, so, ere we are aware, we adopt the manners and customs of our associates, and get a tincture from them. This should be the more regarded by us, because we are sooner made evil by evil, than good by good company. Men convey disease to others, but not health. How careful should we be of our friendship, that we may converse with such as will go before us as examples of piety, and provoke us by their heavenly-mindedness and self-denial, to more love to God, zeal for His glory, and care of our salvation. Especially does this concern the young; who by weakness of judgment, vehemency of affection, and want of experience, may be so easily drawn into a snare.

Our love to God should put us upon loving His people, and making them our intimates; for religion influences all things, our relations, employments, friendships, and converses. It is a pointed question of the prophet—"Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the *Lord?*" Surely a true Christian cannot take

iem into his bosom. He loves all with a love
f good-will, as seeking their good; but not with
love of complacency as delighting in them. Our
eighbour must be loved — *i. e.* our natural (un-
onverted) neighbour, as our natural self—with a
ve of benevolence,—and our spiritual neighbour
s our spiritual self with love of complacency. In
pposition to complacency we may hate our sinful
eighbour, as we hate ourselves. So David saith,
Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate Thee ?"
cannot cry up a confederacy with them. They
iat love God will be thus affected.

There is a civil friendship, built on natural
leasure and profit, when men converse together
or civil ends. They are at liberty to choose their
ompany, as their interest and the course of their
mployments lead them. St. Paul wrote,—a man
iust go out of the world, if he would wholly
scape the company of the wicked.

But then—there is a religious friendship, which
s built on virtue and grace, and is called the
nity of the spirit. Now this is the firmest bond
f all. Sinful societies are soon dissolved. The
ngodly and profane, though they seem to unite
nd hold together, yet, upon every cross word,
all out and break; and civil friendship,—built
n pleasure and profit,—cannot be so firm as that
hich is built *on honesty* and godliness. This

is among the good and holy, who are not so changeable as the bad and worldly; and the ground of it is more lasting. This is *amicitia per se*, from constitution of soul and likeness of spirits. The good we seek may be possessed without envy, the friends do not straiten and intrench upon one another. Self-love and envy soon break friendship; but these seek the good of another as much as their own, and delight in each other's graces. The apostle bids all Christians be knit together in brotherly love: without this they are as a besom unbound; they fall all to pieces. Though there must be friendship to all, some will be chosen for intimacy. Our Lord Christ had such especial friends. This may be because of suitableness or special inclination, or their excellencies of grace. Our converse with these must be improved to the use of edifying, by reproof, advice, counsel. This is kindness to the soul.—THOMAS MANTON, D.D.

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Vain Thoughts.

N never begins to be in earnest, till he makes
ience of his thoughts and his time, and is
ful of his last account.

e psalmist wrote, "I hate vain thoughts."
these consist, sometimes in our arguings or
nings; sometimes by way of foolish inventions
levices in the heart. Our reasonings are
ly against the sovereignty of God. We can-
ee how it is just, that God should choose some
endow them with grace, while He leaves
s in their impenitence. Man would be free
God, but would not have God free.

d as against God's right and sovereignty, so
iere strange discoursings against His provi-
, many anxious debates and traverses in our
s.

) are tortured with suspensive workings and
irses of mind; whereas a little trust in God
l save many of these vain arguings. Want of
in Him, and in His word and providence, is
iuse of much confusion and darkness in our
hts. So against the truth of the gospel.
iw is natural, and comes, by its own light,
evident conviction on the heart; but the
l is suspected, looked upon with prejudice,
ed as a golden dream and a well-devised

fable. We have reasonings in ourselves against that which is discovered concerning the salvation of sinners by Christ, thoughts which exalt themselves against the knowledge of God in Christ, disputes against the mysteries of the Trinity and the incarnation. Trust in God, reliance on His faithful word, persuasion of His boundless wisdom and our own narrow knowledge, will check and suppress those vain thoughts. There are also many vain musings of other kinds. The variety of our thoughts appears in the slipperiness and inconstancy of them. Too usually we have a wandering mind, roving hither and thither, and all in an instant, and especially this distraction may we experience when employed in holy services. Strange, what impertinent, sudden discursions these are, from good to lawful, from lawful to sinful; and how far the heart is removed from God when we are before Him. These vain thoughts pursue and haunt us in duties, so that (as Gregory says) we mingle sulphur with our incense, even in our holy addresses to God. Great, likewise, is the unprofitableness and folly of our musings. Our thoughts are on trifles and frivolities, neither tending to our own profit or the benefit of others. Thoughts are the firstborn of the soul, the immediate issues of the mind, yet we lavish them away upon every trifle.

Let us make conscience of thoughts—because they are the sins of the highest part of man, the mind;—because the free acts of the heart discover more of its temper, than words and actions which are more remote—because thoughts are the roots of all evil, for every act done argues some foregoing thought—because they are numberless. Certainly, if thoughts be sins, God must not only pardon, but *multiply* to pardon. We owe to Him the first-fruits of our reason. To possess our hearts when we awake with the sense of His holy presence, is the means to make the fear of God abide upon us all the day. When we awake, we should think of *Him*.—THOMAS MANTON, D.D.

Good Judgment to be Cultivated and Sought.

A JUDICIOUS, sound mind, is a great blessing, and should earnestly be sought of God by all that would please Him. Good judgment and knowledge are requisite for guiding ourselves and all our affairs. Many are wise in generals, that err in particulars; and have a knowledge of principles, but their affairs are under no conduct. Particulars are nearer to practice, and very learned men are deceived in these. Therefore besides the general rule, the knowledge of God's will, it is necessary to have the gift of discretion, when particulars are clothed with circumstances. There is an infinite variety of circumstances, which require much prudence to determine on them. A man may easily discourse of general truths, concerning God, ourselves, the state of the Church, the privileges of Christianity; but to direct them to particular cases, to govern our own hearts, and order our own ways, that is a harder thing. We read in the Proverbs—"I wisdom dwell with *prudence*." To direct, is harder than to determine or distinguish. It is easier to distinguish of good and evil in the general, to lay down conclusions upon the evidence of the goodness of the ways of God; but to reduce our knowledge to practice in all cases, that is the *great* work of judgment; that we may know what

becomes the time, the place, the company; and may have that "ordering of our conversation aright," to know how to carry ourselves in all relations, business civil, sacred, light, serious; that we neither offend in excess nor defect, that we judge what is due to the Creator, what is to be allowed to the creature, what is good, what is better, what is best of all; that we know how to pay reverence to superiors, how most profitably to converse with equals, what compassion to have for inferiors, how to do good to them: how to behave ourselves as husbands, wives, parents, children: dwelling with relations "according to knowledge."* There is much prudence and wisdom required to know how to converse profitably and Christianly with all that we have to do with. In short, how to love our friends in God, and our enemies for God, how to converse secretly with Him and to walk openly before men, how to do all things in the fear of God, in meats, drinks, apparel, recreations; when and how to pray, what time for our callings, what for worship; when to speak, when to hold our peace, when to praise, when to reprove; how to give and how to take, when to scatter, when to withhold; to order all aright requires a sound judgment, that we may keep up the majesty of religion, and all

* 1 Pet. iii. 7.

the world may know that He is wise by whose counsel we are guided. Where this judgment and discretion are wanting, piety and godliness will not be orderly; we shall either fall into neglect of that course of duty which is needful to maintain the life of grace, or turn religion into a sour, superstitious, and rigorous course of observances. Charity will not be orderly, we shall give to wastefulness, or withhold more than is meet, to the scandal or prejudice of the world towards religion; we shall punish with too much severity, or forbear with too much lenity; our reproofs will be reproaches, our praises flattery. We shall deny ourselves needful comforts, or shall use them amiss, either afflict the body and make it unserviceable, or wrong the soul and burden and oppress it with vain delights. Even the higher acts of religion will degenerate, our fear will become despondency, or our hope presumption. Our faith will be credulity, or our search after truth will turn to scepticism. We shall either slight the hand of God, or faint under it. Such need is there of good judgment to guide us in all our ways. Why this is so earnestly to be sought of God, is evident, because this is a great defect in most Christians, who have many times good affections but no prudence to guide or order them; *zeal without* knowledge; zeal should be not only

fervid but luminous. A blind horse may be full of mettle, but he is ever and anon stumbling. Should we not then earnestly seek of God good knowledge and judgment? The Spirit of God knows what is best for us: He has indited prayer for us: "This I pray, that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and in all judgment."* These words confirm the truth, that it is not enough to have warm affections; but we must have, and seek to attain more fully, a clear and sound mind. God's blessing accompanies use and frequent exercise, and makes it effectual to this end.—THOMAS MANTON, D.D.

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Dependence on God.

WE dishonour God greatly and deny His nature, by not expecting great things from Him. God keeps us from much evil by the secret methods of His providence, or prudential considerations respecting our worldly interest or convenience, while [as yet] there is in us no sanctification. The highest angels know that they are kept in being, and supported every moment in the state of rectitude, by the will and power of God; and this sense of their dependence is their glory, perfection, happiness, song of praise; the ground of their love and adoration.

ADAM.

* *Phil. i. 9*; Col. i. 9; iii. 16.

The Importance of Faith.

FAITH—say the worldly—is the heritage of feeble minds. On the contrary, it is, in some sense, the possession of all; and, in a much higher degree, it is the property of the noblest minds, and the source of all which is great. Reason and faith are the two pillars which uphold human life. The force which supports man on the sea of doubts, is faith: a force which not only accepts truth but seizes and embraces it. Faith in contested truths, calm, patient, and modest reliance, has been the attribute of all great men; that of Galileo amidst universal dissent, that of Leonidas with all probabilities against him and in the face of death; that of Columbus amidst scorn and storm and mutineers. Wherever man has trust in others, or in himself, or in God, he is strong: strong in one respect though weak as to the rest, strong for a time, perhaps weak beyond. Even man's religions have recognised this want. They have succoured numerous minds which lacked faith in themselves, and by framing a superior resource and hope, have in a measure strengthened and guarded human life. But that which is fictitious cannot last. The old paganism is extinct. The faith in it vanished, and gave place to other errors.

Moreover, while it did exist, it had no good

influence on morals, but often the very reverse. It might propose to aid man, more often to rule him, but in no case did it aim to regenerate, or rise to the sublime idea of causing him to find his happiness in the renovation of his nature. As to the faith of deists, it is no more than a very vague and hesitating opinion. When deism has its martyrs, we will account it a religion. Some have a zealous faith in science; some in political liberty; and others who know not what idea to worship, deify themselves. Indeed, all other apotheoses, if we look at them closely, come to this. Such faith may produce great effects. But most men renounce it before life ends, and say with Brutus, Virtue is but a name.

We announce to you the faith of the gospel. It is this faith which saves. Not as a meritorious work; but as having an influence on the life, and by the life on salvation. This faith regenerates; receiving into the heart truths adapted to renew it. When it enters a mind perturbed by remorse and fear, it produces a joy and thankfulness which must needs impel it to a new and contrary course. The man has found peace: can he forsake the source of that peace? Will he return to broken cisterns when he has discovered the fountain of life? Will he not obey Him who for him obeyed even to the *death of* the cross? Will he not

submit to that Father, who, in giving him His only begotten Son, has proved that He cannot but, in all things, desire his happiness? And will he who loves God, hate his brothren? Or will he not pray, who knows that the Spirit intercedes for believers with unuttered groanings? Yes; it is Christian faith which overcomes the world. We find the highest proofs of its power in the many pure, fruitful, consistent lives which Christianity alone exhibits. The life must correspond to its influence. Faith in what is but finite, imperfect, and temporary, can only produce finite and temporary virtues. Therefore the knowledge and belief of the true God is the sole principle or basis of a perfect morality. Nor does this faith only operate on great occasions. It touches the soul at all points. It has constrained to the sacrifice of life, like Leonidas; but it also makes possible the little sacrifices of each day; it arms the soul against the assaults of envy, of evil desire, of anger, of vain glory. Could the faith of Leonidas do this? Besides, faith works by love; and love has no limits. Christian love creates for itself new spheres of effort, new domains to conquer. We see also the certainty of Christian faith. Apart from other and external proofs, the believer has God in his heart. The Christian loves God. *Is he* in this deluded? If Christianity alone give

strength or power to love God, is it not exclusively the truth? This, like all beliefs, recognises and complies with a want of the human soul, but (which no other has done) it satisfies this want; furnishing a principle of energy and action whose characters are in no other faith combined. It has an intenseness, a breadth of application, an elevation of tendency and aim, a certainty, in short, which no other faith possesses. In all these respects it presents a character of perfectness, not realized in any human invention; and if God Himself had given a belief to the world, it were impossible for Him to have given in any respect a better.—VINET.

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Devout Contemplation of the Stars.

I HAVE once more been throwing an eager gaze over the heaven of stars, with the alternate feelings of shrinking into an atom and expanding into an angel—what I but am now! what I may be hereafter! I am amazed that so transcendently awful a spectacle should seize attention so seldom, and affect the habit of thought so little. What is the most magnificent page of a heroic poem, compared with such an expanse of glorious images? It seems the *grand* portico into that infinity in

which the incomprehensible Being resides. Oh that this soul should have within itself so little of that amplitude and that Divine splendour which deify the scene that for ever environs it. Mortifying, that my scope of existence is so little, with the feeling as if it might be so vast. The hemisphere of thought surely ought to have some analogy with the hemisphere of vision. Most mortifying that this wondrous, boundless universe should be so little mine, either by knowledge or by *assimilating influence*. But this vision gives a delightful omen of what the never-dying *mind* may at length behold, may at last become. Oh may I never again disobey or forget a Power whose existence pervades all yonder stars and is their grandeur! It is indeed possible to engage His attention, and enjoy His friendship for ever. In this comparison, what becomes of the importance of our human friendships? Yet, still I am *man*, and the social, tender sentiment at this very moment says in my heart, there are one or two dear persons whom I cannot but wish to have for my affectionate, impassioned associates in exploring those Divine regions.—JOHN FOSTER.

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The Character of Christ no Fiction.

It is utterly incredible that the apostles were capable of feigning such a character as that of our Saviour, such a grand design to be served by Him, such means of serving it, and of supporting such a character through numerous incidents, by speeches as they are recorded in the gospels. If, indeed, they wrote nothing but what they saw with their eyes and heard with their ears, nothing more easy; but if all was fiction, how unequal were they to it! In truth no one can think that such an extraordinary person and character, such a design to be served by Him, such a kingdom entirely spiritual, which hath nothing to do with the kingdoms of this world, to be given to Him,—should ever enter into their imaginations; or if such a character should be suggested to their thoughts, that ever they should introduce Him to the world in circumstances so low, a man despised and rejected, a constant sufferer, and at the last crucified; and though raised again from the dead, yet leaving this world, no more appearing to mankind or visibly interposing in their affairs, but said to be advanced to the Father's right hand in heaven. Who can imagine that this is all the creature of human imagination, especially of such men as the evangelists? To think of their furnishing

such incidents, such actions and speeches, by which this character is so happily and uniformly supported, such a sense of personal dignity, such greatness of mind, such intimate relation to the Father, and sentiments so worthy of it; who can consider this impartially without acknowledging that their account is the very truth? It hath been said by some of the adversaries of Christianity, that the writers of the New Testament are of a very low character; that it is hard to understand their meaning in many passages; that they do not seem to have had clear ideas themselves, or the faculty of communicating their conceptions clearly to others; yet these weak and illiterate and perplexed writers have laid before the world a character which neither a Homer, nor a Virgil, nor a Plato could have framed, and a design greater and more important than could have entered into their imaginations. And what shall we say upon this? Surely the men who will have this gospel history to be a fiction, must be at least greatly surprised, that the evangelists should be capable of such a work; surprised that they should venture upon it; much more that they should so happily succeed in it. . . . One may venture to say, that Christianity will never be overthrown by argument, while such a character as *that of* our Saviour, and so supported, lieth open

to the ingenuous and the impartial. How came we to have it here? is a question to which a person who doth not believe Christianity, will never be able to give a substantial answer.—JAMES DUCHAL, D.D.

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Neglect of the Real Immortality.

BECAUSE all men feel and know and see that they must die and disappear, each seeks an earthly immortality in being evermore remembered. Sometimes great sovereigns, princes, and nobles, have sought it by rearing pillars of marble or lofty pyramids pointing to the skies; by these they have fancied themselves immortalised. And still, by great churches and other sumptuous edifices, warriors have pursued and striven to perpetuate honour and renown after their famous victories. Learned men seek by the composition of books an undying name, as we often see in our own day. But as to the everlasting, imperishable honour—an eternity with God—to this they pay no regard. Ah, we are a despicable race!*—LUTHER.

* Luther says literally, Ah, we are poor folk; "*Ach, wir sind arme leute;*" but the expression would hardly pass in our language.

On a Lady's fine and costly Cabinet.

It is not strange that persons of the fairer sex should like, in all things about them, that handsomeness, for which they find them*selves* to be liked; nor would I forbid even such of them as are not of very high quality, to have a retiring place so neatly adorned as may invite them to be alone, and withdraw to it to read or meditate, provided those ornaments be not so costly as to rob charity, or so gaudy as to distract the devotion they should but accommodate. But too often when the lady herself and the house and her cabinet are furnished with all the ornaments that vanity and emulation call for, there is nothing left for charity to dispose of, nay, perhaps not for justice; the creditor being oftentimes turned back empty as well as the beggar, if not also made a beggar by ruinous delays. And greater fortunes than most ladies have, may be exhausted by gratifying such an ambition as that of a cabinet to whose costliness nothing can put limits, till discretion do.

I know it is said, that these sumptuous apartments, and other vanities, are not simply unlawful in their own nature; but I know, too, that divers things, not in their own nature unlawful, may be rendered so by circumstances; and if so, then I *fear,* that that can be no other than ill which

makes one needlessly disable himself to do good. The apostle who discountenanced women's wearing gold or precious things upon their persons, would sure have opposed their having more costly ornaments upon their walls; these cannot pray for us, but the poor and distressed whom they keep us from relieving, may either successfully pray to God for us, or cry to Him against us. A few such cabinets as this lady's might be easily enlarged and contrived into a hospital. A small part of these superfluities would relieve the necessities of many families. Nor is this practice so unallied to a fault, as to escape a punishment often even in this world: these courtiers of applause being oftentimes reduced to live in want, even in the midst of a plentiful fortune; these costly trifles so engrossing all which they can spare, that they must sometimes deny themselves things convenient, and perhaps almost necessary, to flaunt it out with those that are neither the one nor the other; and being frequently enough fain to immolate their own inclination and desires, though perchance strong and innocent, to their vanity. And those that have once found the happiness there is in making others happy, will think their treasure better bestowed in feeding hungry mouths than idle eyes: the costly practice I am censuring does not only offend *charity* but starve it; by subtract-

ing from it that which should feed it, and enable it to act like itself. And for my part, I think, he that devises, and by his example gives credit to, a new, expensive way of vanity, does really destroy [the comfort of] more poor, than if he usurped an almshouse or ruined a hospital. It is no very Christian practice to disobey the dictates of piety, without having so much to plead for so doing, as the pretence of following the dictates of custom; and it is a great deal better to be without a gay cabinet, than to be without charity, the loveliest of Christian virtues.—ROBERT BOYLE.

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On the Danger of Approaches to Evil.

EUGENIUS walked along the river's brink, which the moisture of the waters that glided by had adorned with a pleasant verdure; but he had not gone far, when chancing to tread on a place where the current had worn the bank and made it hollow, he found the earth falter under him, and could not hinder his feet from slipping down with the turf that betrayed him; nor could he have escaped so, had not his efforts to cast his weight towards the bank been assisted by his companion.

Eusebius asked him how he came to fall; and on his answering that he thought he had trod

upon firm ground, because the bank looked, to the very edge, as if it differed not from the rest of the field which it terminated, Eusebius took occasion from thence to say, You may from this take notice that it is not safe travelling upon the *confines* of what is lawful and what is sinful, no more than upon the borders of two hostile nations. When we suppose that thus far we may go towards that which is sinful without committing it, we are wont, with more boldness than considerateness, to conclude that we need not scruple to venture, or rather that we shall run no venture, having firm footing all the way. But it is much to be feared that when we allow ourselves to come as far as the utmost *verge* of what is lawful, and to do that which, in the casuist's language, is *tantum non* (but just not) to sin, the natural proclivity of our minds to evil, which carries them downwards, as weight does our bodies, will some time or other make us find hollow ground where we presume to find it firm. He that to-day will go towards sin as far as he thinks he may, is in danger of going to-morrow farther than he should; and it is far more easy for him to feel secure than to be safe, who walks upon the brink of a precipice. He was a wise man that as soon as he had forbidden his son to enter into the path of the wicked and to go in the way of evil men, subjoins, as the best course,

to conform to the prescription, "Avoid it, pass not by it; turn from it, and pass away." God's indulgence leaves us a latitude to comply with our infirmities and necessities, and to give us opportunities of exercising a pious jealousy over ourselves, and of showing how much we fear to offend Him. But a wary Christian will say in this case, as St. Paul did in almost a like, "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient;" and he must often go farther than he can with prudence, that will always go as far as he thinks he can with innocence.—ROBERT BOYLE.

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The Love of God Prevenient and Unchanging.

FEW can so carry up their hearts and minds to the height of faith, as to rest their souls in the love of the Father; they live below it, in the troublesome region of hopes and fears, storms and clouds All here is serene and quiet. But how to attain to this elevation they know not. This is the will of God, that He may be always eyed as benign, kind, tender, loving, and unchangeable therein; and that peculiarly *as* the Father, as the great Fountain and spring of all gracious communications and fruits of love. The soul being thus by faith, through Christ and by Him, brought into the

osom of God, into a comfortable persuasion and piritual perception and sense of His love, there eposes and rests itself.

When the soul sees God, in His dispensation of ove, to be infinitely loving and lovely, rests upon lim, and delights in Him as such, then hath it ommunion with Him in love. This is love, that od loves us first, and then we love Him again.— ove is an affection of union and nearness, with omplacency therein.

So long as the Father is looked upon with any ther apprehension but only as acting love upon he soul, it breeds in the soul a dread and aversa- ion. Hence the flying and hiding of sinners, in he Scriptures. But when He who is the Father, s considered as a Father, acting love on the soul, his raises it to love again. This is in truth the round of all acceptable obedience.

The love of God is, like Himself, equal, constant, ot capable of augmentation or diminution; our ove is like ourselves, unequal, increasing, waning, rowing, declining. His, like the sun, is always the ame in its light, though a cloud may sometimes nterpose; ours, as the moon, hath its enlarge- ments and straitenings. Our Father will not lways chide, lest we be cast down; He doth not lways smile, lest we be full and neglect Him; but et still His love in itself is the same. The love

of God in itself is the eternal purpose and act of His will. This is no more changeable than God Himself; if it were, no flesh could be saved; but He changeth not, and we are not consumed. What then? Loves He His people in their sinning. Yes, His people; not their sinning. Alters He not His love towards them? Not the purpose of His will, but the dispensation of His grace. He rebukes them, He chastens them, He hides His face from them, He smites them, He fills them with the sense of indignation; but woe, woe would it be to us, should He change His love, or take away His kindness from us. Those very things which seem to be demonstrations of the change of His affections towards His, do as clearly proceed from love, as those which seem to be the most genuine issues thereof. But will not this encourage to sin? He never tasted of the love of God, who can seriously make this objection. The doctrine of grace may be turned into wantonness; the principle cannot. I shall not wrong the saints by giving other answer to this objection. Detestation of sin in any may well consist with the acceptation of their persons and their designation to life eternal.

Unacquaintedness with our mercies, our privileges, is our sin as well as our trouble. We *hearken* not to the voice of the Spirit "which is

given unto us that we may know the things that are freely bestowed on us of God." This makes us go heavily, when we might rejoice; and to be weak, when we might be strong in the Lord. How few of the saints are experimentally acquainted with this privilege, of holding communion with the Father in love! With what anxious, doubtful thoughts do they look upon Him! What fears, what questionings are there of His good-will and kindness! At the best, many think that there is no sweetness at all in Him towards us, but what is purchased at the high price of the blood of Jesus: it is true, that alone is the way of communication; but the free fountain and spring of all, is in the bosom of the *Father:* "eternal life was with the Father and is manifested unto us." "Herein is love (saith the Holy Ghost), not that we loved God, but that He loved us first." Now thou wouldst invert this order, and say, "Herein is love, not that God loved me, but that I loved Him first." This is to take the glory of God from Him: that whereas He loves us without a cause that is in ourselves, and we have all cause in the world to love Him, thou wouldst have the contrary; viz., that something should be in thee for which God should love thee, even thy love to Him, and that thou shouldst love God before thou knowest anything lovely in Him;

viz., whether He love thee or no. This is a course which will never bring glory to God, nor peace to thy own soul. Lay down thy reasonings: take up the love of the Father upon a pure act of believing, and that will open thy soul to let it out unto the Lord in the communion of love. When a child is abused abroad in the streets by strangers, he runs with speed to the bosom of his father; there he makes his complaint and is comforted. In all the hard censures which the saints meet with in the world, they may run to their Father and be comforted: "As one whom his mother comforteth so will I comfort you, saith the Lord." The soul may say, If I have hatred in the world, I will go where I am sure of love; though all others are hard to me, my Father is tender, and full of compassion; I will go to Him, and satisfy myself in Him. Then I shall have all things in the fountain which others have but in the drops:—there is the sweetness of all mercies, and that fully and durably.—JOHN OWEN, D.D.

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On the Sacrifice of Christ.

O CHRISTIAN soul, renovated from spiritual death, redeemed and freed from wretched servitude by the blood of Christ, stir up thy thoughts, remember thy renewal, ponder thy redemption and liberation. Review where and what is the power of thy salvation, exercise thyself in meditating on it: delight thyself in the contemplation of it. Shake off thy reluctance, and apply thy attention to this. Taste the goodness of thy Redeemer; be warmed with thy Saviour's love. . . . Where, then, and what, is the virtue and strength of thy deliverance? Surely Christ hath quickened thee: He, the good Friend, hath, by His life given, set thee free. The virtue of thy salvation is the virtue of Christ. What fortitude in such infirmity! What loftiness in such humility! What venerableness amidst such contempt! Hidden in infirmity, concealed by humility, latent amidst contempt! Oh hidden greatness! that One suspended on a cross should suspend the everlasting death which pressed on human kind. Oh secret power, that One condemned with robbers, should save those who are condemned with demons; that He who was extended on the torturing tree, should draw all men to Himself! Oh secret virtue, that one soul departing in anguish, should rescue the unnumbered from woe;

that One should take on Him bodily death, and thus destroy the death of souls! Was there a necessity, that the Most High should thus humble Himself, and the Almighty labour to accomplish this? But all necessity and impossibility are subject to His will. What He wills, it is necessary shall be; what He wills not, it is impossible should be. All His will is ever good, and by His will alone hath He effected this. God needed not, that in this mode He should redeem and save man, but human nature needed that in this manner the claim of Divine justice should be satisfied.* The Divine nature neither needed to be humbled or to be troubled, nor could be so; it was needful that the human nature, in order to restore it to the state for which it was made, should accomplish all this; but neither it, nor whatever is not God, could suffice to achieve the work. For man is not restored to what he was created for, unless he be advanced to the likeness of angels in whom is no sin. This is impossible to be done, except by having received entire remission of sins, which cannot take place unless by an entire satisfaction preceding it, which satisfaction must be such that the sinner, or some one on his behalf, should give

* "Ut hoc modo Domino meo satisfaceret:" *i.e.*, satisfy the honour of God's government, or the attribute of justice. —EDIT.

somewhat of his own to God, not due, which would surpass (or overcome *) all that is not God. For if to sin is to dishonour God, and this man ought not to do (though it were requisite that all which is not God should therefore perish), then truth which is immutable and obvious reason demand, that he who sins should render to God for his lost honour something greater than that by which he ought not to have dishonoured Him. But since human nature of itself had this not, nor could be reconciled without the satisfaction due [to justice], so neither it nor aught that is not God, could suffice for that. Lest therefore the justice of God should leave in His kingdom sin not duly recognised and rebuked [*inordinatum*] the goodness of God interposed, and the Son of God assumed it in His own person; that in His person God might be man, who would not only have what must surpass all being which is not God, but who while owing nothing Himself would discharge every debt which sinners owe, for those who had no power themselves to pay. For the life of this Mediator is more precious than all which is not God, and surpasses all the debt which sinners owe. That the death of the Son of God transcends all the multitude and magnitude of sins that can be conceived is manifest, because His life is more ex-

* Superet omne, quod Deus non est.

cellent than all sins are evil. That life did the Redeemer, on whom, because sinless, death could have no claim, give, of His own choice, for the honour of the Father, permitting it to be taken for the sake of justice. . . .

Therefore the human nature, in this Son of God, voluntarily yielded up what was His own, that He might redeem those by whom the debt could never be discharged.

In all which the Divine nature is not humiliated, but the human exalted; nor is the one impaired [*imminuta*], while the other is mercifully succoured. Behold, O Christian, this is the virtue of thy salvation; this the cause of thy freedom; this the price of thy redemption. Thus art thou the exile brought back, the lost restored, the dead raised up. Make this through life thy daily nutriment and support; by this, and no way except this, thou wilt abide in Christ and Christ in thee, and thy future life be the fulness of joy.—ANSELM.

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Carelessness of the Supreme Good.

ASTONISHING fact, that all which mankind acknowledge the greatest, they care about the least; as first, on the summit of all greatness,—the DEITY. 'Tis acknowledged He reigns over all, is present always *here*, prevails in each atom and each star, observes us as an awful Judge, claims infinite regard, is supremely good—what then? Why think nothing at all about Him.

There is Eternity; you have lived perhaps thirty years; you are by no means entitled to expect so much more life; you at the utmost will very soon, *very* soon die! What follows? Eternity! A boundless region; inextinguishable life; myriads of mighty and strange spirits; vision of God; glories, horrors! Well—what then? Why think nothing at all about it.

There is the great affair—moral and religious improvement. What is the true business of life? To grow wiser; more pious; more benevolent; more ardent; more elevated to every noble purpose and action; to resemble the Almighty. It is acknowledged; who denies or doubts it? What then? Why care nothing at all about it! Sacrifice to trifles the energies of the heart, and the short and fleeting time allotted for Divine attainments! Such is the actual course of the world. *What a thing is* mankind!—JOHN FOSTER.

God's Love must be Infinite.

It is entirely credible, that God who loves infinitely, should give proofs of this proportioned to the infinitude of His love and of His power; that which is appropriate to the omnipotence of God surpasses far the capacity of our feeble reason; and when it pleases God to assure our hearts that His love is the cause of all that we believe, this assurance persuades us more than all books can do. "The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father He hath declared Him." But all which He has said is summed up in this one word of His gospel: "God so loved the world that He gave His beloved Son." Ask no more what has united, in Jesus Christ, heaven and earth, the cross and Divine greatness. "God so loved the world." Is it incredible that God should love, and that goodness should communicate itself? What is not undertaken by courageous spirits from the love of glory, by vulgar minds from the love of riches? —Nothing repels them; neither toils, nor perils, nor pains. Of such prodigies man is capable; and if man who is but weakness, attempts what is often impracticable, shall God perform nothing marvellous to satisfy *His* love? Let us say then, for our one reason of belief in the highest mystery—"God so loved the world."—This is the

r's doctrine, and the beloved disciple also stood it well. In his day Cerinthus, a arch, would not believe that God could have ıe man, and made Himself a victim for rs; what did this apostle, this prophet of the Testament, this great divine, so holy and able, who had no strength left but to preach y, saying, "Love one another,"—what did he to the heresiarch? What symbol [compen-] of faith, what confession did he oppose to nascent heresy?—"We have known and red the love that God hath to us." This is whole faith of Christians; the source and bridgment of our creed.—BOSSUET.

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The Christian Victory over Death.

omplete is our dissolution by death, that (as ıllian has said) the very name of corpse, h indicates a somewhat of human form, be- to it but a little while; it becomes something ether nameless; so true is it that it wholly even the funereal terms by which were de- ed its perishing remains. Thus is it that the r of God, justly indignant at our pride, re- s it to nothingness, and to equalize finally our itions, makes the same ashes of us all. Can

one build on these ruins? Can one found some great design on this inevitable demolition of human life?—But is then all desperate for us? God, who smites down our grandeur, and crushes it to dust, does He leave for us no hope? He in whose view nothing is lost, who follows all the particles of our frame to whatever distant spot corruption or chance have borne them,—will He see irrecoverably perish that which He made capable of knowing and loving Himself? Here a new order of things is unfolded. The shadows of death are dispelled. "Thou wilt show me the path of life." Our friend is not in the tomb: death, which seemed to extinguish all, has established all. Be assured, Christians, that beside the relation which our bodies have to this mutable and mortal state, we have on the other hand an intimate relation and secret affinity with God; because He Himself has placed within us a spirit which can confess the reality of His Being, can adore its perfection, and admire its plenitude; which can submit to His sovereign power, yield itself up to His high and unsearchable wisdom, confide in His goodness, fear His justice, hope for His immortality. In this respect, if man deems himself exalted, he is not self-deceived, for as each thing must needs be reunited to its principle (origin), while the body returns to dust, "the spirit will return to God

who gave it. That in us which bears the mark of Divinity, which is capable of being united to God, will return to Him: and that which will return to God, who is the primal and essential greatness, will not that be great and exalted? Therefore, when I said that greatness and glory here are but pompous names, without real meaning, I was looking at the wrong *use* we make of those terms; but, in truth, it is not error or vanity that has invented these magnificent names; we should never have found them, if they had not a basis in ourselves; for how can these noble thoughts be drawn from nonentity? Our fault is not in using the names, but in misapplying them to unworthy objects. Chrysostom has well understood this when He said, "Glory, riches, nobility, power, for men of the world are but names; for us, if we serve God, they are things. On the contrary, poverty, shame, death, are for them things too effectual and real; but for us names only, because he who adheres to God, loses neither his goods, nor his honour, nor his life. In effect, till we attain true wisdom, while we regard bodily interests alone, overlooking the secret principle within us—the spirit which returns to God, and can be united to Him—what else shall we see in our life than foolish disquietude, what else in our death than a vapour which exhales, power ex-

hausted, springs broken, a machine fallen to pieces! Weary of these vanities, let us seek that which is great and substantial, within us. We see it in the last words of Ecclesiastes, "Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole of man." As if he had said, It is not man that I have despised; believe it not; it is the opinions, the errors, by which deluded man degrades himself. Would you know, in a word, what man is? All his duty, his true aim, his nature, is to fear God. All the rest, I repeat, is vain, but also, all the rest is not the man. What is real and substantial is what death cannot take away. The psalmist says, "In that day his thoughts perish." Yes, the thoughts which have been directed and attached to this world, the fashion whereof passeth away. For although our spirit is formed to live always, it abandons at death all that was devoted to mortal things; so that the thoughts which were unperishing in their nature become perishable on account of their objects. Would you save anything from this so inevitable, universal ruin? Give your affections to God. No force shall snatch from you what you commit into hands Divine.—BOSSUET.

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On the Resurrection of Christ.

WHY did not the Sanhedrim, for its honour and ıe triumph of truth, compel "the watch"—the uards of Christ's sepulchre—to a confession? f they omitted this at first, would they have con-nued to do so when they afterwards saw the city f Jerusalem inclined to embrace the faith of the rucified, thousands believing in Him fifty days fter His death? Doubtless the guards were still ı Jerusalem. The great council had the same ower and authority. It was their duty to punish ıe negligence of the guards, or to extort from ıem the secret of their perfidy. It was important) search this out, both for justifying the conduct f the Sanhedrim, and for preventing the delusion f a multitude who were ranging themselves on ıe side of the disciples of the impostor. I ask ırther—When on the day of Pentecost the apostles ppeared in Jerusalem, testifying that they had ›en Jesus Christ risen from His tomb, and that ter He had several times conversed with them, ıd had ascended to heaven, He had imparted to ıem singular and miraculous gifts,—why did not ıe Sanhedrim, who had so urgent an interest to iscover the agents in the removal of Christ's ›dy, why did it not seize the apostles to compel confession of the truth from them? Why not

confront them with "the watch"? Why not have put Joseph of Arimathea and those men in prison, till they had avowed what they had done with the corpse, with the other circumstances of their fraud? It is utterly improbable that if the disciples had come by night and removed their Master's body, they would have dared to show themselves boldly before the people and avow themselves openly to be His followers; much more credible that after such a step they should have hid themselves, and preached (if anywhere) at places afar off, not in those where the events happened, before the eyes of that council whom they had so feared and so offended. It is well known how men act on such occasions. If the fact had been as the guards had reported it, they themselves would not have failed to search throughout Jerusalem for some disciple of Jesus, to make him confess the truth; the scribes and the Pharisees would have made a strict search, and there would have been found testimonies or indications of the act.

We may turn from the guards to the apostles. It is contrary to common sense to imagine that a man should expose himself to sufferings and death for the sake of bearing witness to a fact which he distinctly knew to be false. Even if one person could act so insanely, we cannot without extravagance imagine that a great number of persons

ould do so; but if a multitude could agree to ive this false testimony at such a hazard, surely ot of those who viewed lying and treachery as in- ompatible with salvation. Such concert could not ake place, besides, without there being some one, ho from dread of punishment, would discover the mposture to the Jews. If Jesus was betrayed when ving, much more when dead. Something might be xpected from Jesus living, but nothing from Him ead, save misery and suffering, with the shame nd remorse of having followed an impostor. inally, it cannot be doubted, that the same feel- ngs which had led them to "forsake" Christ, and hus to break up their concerted faithfulness, must uch more have broken their agreement in false- ood. It is well to consider the *numbers* of disci- les who bear witness that Jesus rose from the ead. St. Paul affirms to the Corinthians (1 Cor. v. 6) that Christ was seen, after His resurrection, y "above five hundred brethren at once, of whom he greater part remain unto this present, but some re fallen asleep." Certainly St. Paul could not nd would not have written thus if there had not een a large number of disciples who bore witness hat they had seen the risen Jesus. Is it then ossible that a large number should concert so alpable an imposture as this would be if no re- urrection had occurred? It is not human, or

possible, or conceivable. It would be to suppose that after Christ's death they were no longer men. They expect and hope for nothing. For what could they expect from their profession of faith in Him, knowing that He is *not* risen as He had promised? What could they hope if He who had promised everlasting life, remained under the power of death? They were fearful while they hoped in Him; and now that they can have no hope in Him they cease to fear. While they believed that they were serving God in suffering for Christ's sake, they were yet timid; now that they know they are not serving God, but dishonouring themselves by a falsehood, they are become firm, courageous, intrepid in danger and temptation. Who can comprehend this? It is not to be imagined that such a conspiracy to deceive should exist or endure, unless the multitude of disciples had lost their senses all at once by the same sort of madness, seizing on them when Christ had expired.—ABBADIE.

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Christianity makes Man Great.

RELIGION enlightens us as to the debasement of man. Is not this wonderfully great, since in his natural condition he knows not what he is nor what he ought to be; occupied with projects and views which concern him for scarcely more than an instant, unable to bear the scrutiny of himself, or to be independent of others. Nevertheless, if we avow the truth, we shall acknowledge that man has sentiments which give glimpses of his greatness, through the veils of his degradation. He employs himself on the least things, but he cannot content himself with the greatest. He seeks the respect of all, loving to magnify himself by a sort of immensity, which intimates his origin. He buries himself in cares of this life, but finding all disproportionate to what he is, he tends towards eternity, and since he knows not the real, he creates the imaginary, and would survive himself by being immortalised in the memory of men in spite of death. Who can put man in accord with man? Why such elevated feelings combined with such baseness? Or why so deep a debasement accompanied by such greatness? Listen to the religion of Christ; it will explain these enigmas. It will teach you that man consists of body and soul, and that the qualities of these greatly differ. By

his body he is part of the material world: this is the source of his meanness. In his spirit he was formed in the image of God: this is the source of his greatness. Let infidels consider the true greatness of man in him who subjects the passions and affections of the body to the spirit. They will find in him a creature who has lately begun to be, but who glories in having come from God; an atom who raises himself above all the creatures, and aspires towards his Divine Original, to pay Him homage for his little being; a worm which has the high distinction of offering himself to the glory of God, to which other creatures contribute but unconsciously; a mortal, it is true, but who places all his hopes beyond mortality; a finite being, but whose views and desires are boundless. There need but six feet of earth to cover his body, but there must be an immense All to satisfy his soul. He inherits all things, since he feels himself the son of Him who made them all. Nor is he of those who grow proud by aggrandisement, and connot humble themselves without dejection. He is great without pride, because he knows his natural abasement; and humble without baseness, because he knows his real elevation. He has a covenant with God, which the ruin of the body cannot dissolve. If he wins no provinces, and sacks no cities, he is

hty enough to subdue the passions which have ɜed such deeds. He regards as a dream what world most admires. If he is raised to its ours, he will think himself not really the ıter; if every way afflicted, he will not account self the less. He elevates himself above all ch is seen, that he may descend with more liness in the presence of his God who is unseen. sessing eternity though he exists in time, child ɨod though living among men, he feels himself fted above all; but he is great chiefly by his ıility. Now it is the religion of Christ alone ch not only reveals to us this greatness of ı, but also produces it, in subjecting our ner self to the more noble. In renouncing faith, we lose all that exalts us, and the sure of our incredulity is that of our debase-t.—ABBADIE.

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On the Waste of Time.

Of all things time is the most precious, since it is the purchase of eternity. According to the use or abuse of the time allotted to us, will be our final award.* Since God in our creation, has imposed on us all a strict obligation to work out our salvation, He has thus enjoined us to employ diligently the time granted us at this hour. "Let us not be weary in well-doing." Time is given us not merely for our own personal use, but specially for God and for His glory. At all seasons it behoves us to keep this in mind, and to remember that when we steal time from the work and service of God, we act like the servant who employs for himself the time which belongs to his master. Of a truth, then, my sin is great when I waste in indolence or vain pursuits the time which I owe to God. Did no other ill beset my way of life, the waste of time would, of itself, be an evil of incalculable magnitude. And it is by so much the greater, that time, once elapsed, returns no more. Where now for me are the years which have gone by? Each day, each hour, might have been improved

* "Time is to be more treasured than eternity. For by a little hour well spent may a whole blissful eternity be secured; but with all that eternity cannot one moment of time be recalled and redeemed."—Rittmeyer.

to a hundred-fold return; but what remains? where is the treasure which they might have been made to yield? where, at the hour of death, will be the years which it may please God yet to grant me? If they prove as sterile as many already past, what shall I have realized, and of how much shall I be actually possessed? I may regret their misemployment; but will all my regret redeem the loss? I may comprehend the extent, both of the gain I might have received, and of the loss I have incurred; I may lament, but in spite of my lamentation the sad thought will recur, that the season of improvement was once present but is gone for ever by,—that the loss was voluntary, and that it is now irretrievable. Why am I not so blest as to be able now, in this my day, effectually to anticipate those solemn convictions,—I could—I can no longer. I shall then implore again and again that God would prolong my term, and promise that if a period yet be given, its smallest portion shall be improved. Excellent resolutions! But will God give ear to them? Ah, it were wiser to make them *now*, while time remains for beneficial practice. Is there not still opportunity for me to redeem the time? Happily, God yet bears with me. Then let me without delay, profit by His forbearance. All procrastination is hazardous, since I know not how brief may be my

allotted period; dark uncertainty overhangs the future. Without delay, let me address myself to a diligent improvement of present means. Merciful Lord, teach me to lose no moment of my precious time; keep me from that destructive reckoning on to-morrow, which has deceived so many to their final ruin; give me grace to act now and decidedly, make me vigilant and active, and enable me to go on my heavenly way with diligence and perseverance, "redeeming the time."

BOURDALOUE.

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Preparation for Reunion and Blessedness in Heaven.

IF the mere conception of the reunion of good men in a future state, infused a momentary rapture into the mind of Tully,—if an airy speculation (for there is reason to fear it had little hold on his convictions), could inspire him with such delight,—what may we be expected to feel, who are assured of such an event by the *true sayings of God?* How should we rejoice in the prospect, the certainty rather, of spending a blissful eternity with those whom we loved on earth, of seeing them emerge from the ruins of the tomb, and the deeper ruins of the fall, not only uninjured but refined and perfected, "with every tear wiped

'rom their eyes," standing before the throne of ɔod and the Lamb, "in white robes with palms in heir hands, crying with a loud voice, Salvation to ɔod that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb or ever and ever!" What delight will it afford ɔ renew the sweet counsel we have taken to-ether, to recount the toils of combat, and the ıbour of the way, and to approach, not the house, ut the throne of God in company, in order to join ı the symphonies of heavenly voices, and lose urselves amidst the splendours and fruitions of he beatific vision! To that state all the pious n earth are tending; and if there is a law from 'hose operation none are exempt, which irresisti-ly conveys their bodies to darkness and to dust, ıere is another, not less certain or less powerful, 'hich conducts their spirits to the abodes of bliss, ı the bosom of their Father and their God. The heels of nature are not made to roll backward; 'erything presses on towards eternity; from the rth of time an impetuous current has set in, hich bears all the sons of men towards that inter-inable ocean. Meanwhile heaven is attracting itself whatever is congenial to its nature, is en-ching itself by the spoils of earth, and collecting thin its capacious bosom whatever is pure, per-ınent, and Divine, leaving nothing for the last ɔ to consume but the objects and the slaves of

concupiscence; while everything which grace has prepared and beautified shall be gathered and selected from the ruins, to adorn that eternal city "which hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for the glory of God doth enlighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Let us obey the voice that calls us thither; let us seek the things that are above, and no longer cleave to a world which must shortly perish, and which we must shortly quit, while we neglect to prepare for that in which we are invited to dwell for ever. Let us follow in the track of those holy men who have taught us by their voice and encouraged us by their example, that "laying aside every weight and the sin that most easily besets us, we may run with patience the race set before us." While everything within us and around us reminds us of the approach of death, and concurs to teach us that this is not our rest, let us hasten our preparations for another world, and earnestly implore that grace, which alone can put an end to the fatal war which our desires have too long waged with our destiny. When these move in the same direction, and that which the will of Heaven renders unavoidable shall become our choice, all things will be ours. Life will be divested of its vanity, and death of its terrors.—ROBERT HALL.

God's Faithfulness in His Works and in His Words.

We know not a better practical habit for the growth and the discipline of piety, than that of recognising the unchangeable faithfulness of God through our daily and hourly experience of the constancy of nature. Your faith in it is of His working,—and what a condition would you have been reduced to, had the faith which is within not been met by an entire accordance of the fulfilments which are without! He has not told you what to expect by the utterance of a voice, but He has taught you what to expect by the leadings and the intimations of a strong constitutional tendency; and, in virtue of this, there is not a human creature who does not believe, and almost as firmly as in his own existence, that fire will continue to burn, and water to cool, and matter to resist, and unsupported bodies to fall, and ocean to bear the adventurous vessel upon its surface, and the solid earth to uphold the tread of his footsteps; and that spring will appear again in her wonted smiles, and summer will glow into heat and brilliancy, and autumn will put on the same luxuriance as before, and winter at its stated periods revisit the world with its darkness and storms. We cannot sum up these countless vari-

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eties of nature; but the firm expectation is, that throughout them all, as she has been established, so she will abide to the day of her final dissolution. And I call upon you to recognise, in nature's constancy, the answer of nature's God to this expectation. All these material agents are, in fact, the organs by which He expresses His faithfulness to the world; and that unveering generality which reigns and continues everywhere, is but the perpetual demonstration of a truth that never varies, as well as of laws that never are rescinded. It is for us that He upholds the world in all its regularity. It is for us that He sustains so inviolably the march and the movement of those innumerable progressions which are going on around us. It is in remembrance of His promises to us that He meets all our anticipations of nature's uniformity, with the evolutions of a law that is unalterable. It is because He is a God who cannot lie, that He will make no invasion on that wondrous correspondency which He Himself hath instituted, between the world that is without, and our little world of hopes and projects and anticipations that are within. By the constancy of nature He hath imprinted upon it the lesson of His own constancy,—and that very characteristic wherewith some would fortify the ungodliness of *their* hearts, is the most impressive exhibition

which can be given of God, as always faithful, and always the same. . . . The lesson is commensurate with the whole system of things—and with an effulgence as broad as the face of creation, and as clear as the light which is poured over it, does it at once tell that nature is unchangeably constant, and that God is unchangeably true. He who is fixed as to the ordinances of nature, is faithful as to the declarations of His word; and as all experience proves how firmly He may be trusted for the one, so there is an argument as strong as experience to prove how firmly He may be trusted for the other. By His work in us, He hath awakened the expectation of a constancy in nature, which He never disappoints. By His word to us, should He awaken the expectation of a certainty in His declarations, *that* He will never disappoint. It is because nature is so fixed, that we apprehend the God of nature to be so faithful. He who never falsifies the hope that hath arisen in every bosom, from the instinct which He Himself hath communicated, will never falsify the hope that shall arise in any bosom from the express utterance of His voice. Were He a God in whose hand the processes of nature were ever shifting, then might we conceive a God from whose mouth the proclamations of grace had the like character of variance and vacillation. But it is just because

of our reliance on the one, that we feel so much repose in our dependence on the other—and the same God who is so unfailing in the ordinances of His creation, do we hold to be equally unfailing in the ordinances of His word. . . . It is strikingly accordant with these views that nature has never been known to recede from her constancy, but for the purpose of giving place and demonstration to the authority of the word. Once, in a season of miracle, did the word take the precedency of nature; but ever since hath nature resumed her courses, and is now proving, by her steadfastness, the authority of that which she then proved to be authentic by her deviations. When the word was first ushered in, nature gave way for a period, after which she moves in her wonted order, till the present system of things shall pass away, and that faith which is now upholden by nature's constancy, shall then receive its accomplishment in Nature's dissolution. And oh, how God magnifieth His word above all His name, when He tells us that "heaven and earth shall pass away, but that His word shall not pass away," and that, while His creation shall become a wreck, not one jot or one tittle of His testimony shall fail. The world passeth away, but the word endureth for ever—and if the faithfulness of God stand forth so legibly on

the face of the temporary world, how surely may we reckon on the faithfulness of that word which has a vastly higher place in the counsels and fulfilments of eternity. . . . Surely this contemplation ought to encourage all who are looking to the announcements of the same God in the gospel, and who perceive that He has there embarked the same truth, and the same unchangeableness, on the offers of mercy. All Nature gives testimony to this, that He cannot lie—and seeing that He has stamped such enduring properties on the elements even of our perishable world, never should I falter from that confidence which He hath taught me to feel, when I think of that property wherewith the blood which was shed for me cleanseth from all sin, and wherewith the body which was broken, beareth the burden of all its penalties. He who hath so nobly met the faith that He has given to all in the constancy of nature, by a uniformity which knows no abatement, will meet the faith which He has given to any in the certainty of grace, by a fulfilment to every believer which knows no exception.* . . . The present age is

* Dr. Watts has offered this thought in a well-known hymn.

"His very word of grace is strong
As that which built the skies;
The voice that rolls the stars along
Speaks all the promises." EDIT.

re-echoing the lesson of all past ages,—and that spectacle of nature which has misled those who by wisdom know not God, into dreary atheism, has enhanced every demonstration, both of His veracity and power, to all intelligent worshippers. We know that heaven and earth and sea still discharge the same functions, and subserve the very same beneficent processes. We know that astronomy plies the same rounds as before, that the cycles of the firmament move in their old and appointed order, and that the year circulates, as it has ever done, in graceful variety, over the face of an expectant world—but only because all are of God, and they continue this day according to His ordinances, for all are His servants.

Now it is just because the successions which take place in the economy of nature, are so invariable, that we should expect those which take place in the economy of God's moral government to be equally invariable. That expectation which He never disappoints when it is the fruit of a universal instinct, He surely never will disappoint when it is the fruit of His own express and immediate revelation.—(CHALMERS, THOS., D.D)

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Death to be Welcomed by the Christian.

THERE is no light but what is derived from the sun; no true joy but from heaven: as, therefore, the nearer to the sun the more light and heat, so the nearer to heaven the more excess of joy. And certainly, O my soul, there is nothing but unbelief can keep thee from an exuberance of joy and delight, in the apprehension of heaven. Can the weary traveller, after he hath measured many tedious miles, and passed many dangers both by sea and land, and felt the harsh entertainment of a stranger, fail to rejoice on drawing near, on his return, to a rich and pleasant home? Can the ward after a hard pupilage, fail to rejoice that the day is coming wherein he shall freely enjoy his revenues and royalties? . . . And canst thou apprehend thyself now approaching to the glory of the heaven of heavens, a place and state of such infinite contentment and happiness, and not be filled with joy? There, there shalt thou, O my soul, enjoy a perfect rest from all thy cares, toils, and fears; there shalt thou find a true vital life, free from all the encumbrances of thy earthly pilgrimage; a life which the most glorious Deity both gives and *is;* a life wherein thou hast the fruition of the ever-blessed Godhead, the continual society of the *celestial spirits,* the blissful presence of the

glorified humanity of thy dear Saviour; a life wherein thou dost ever consort with the glorious company of the apostles, the goodly fellowship of patriarchs and prophets, the noble army of martyrs and confessors, in short, the blessed assembly of all the faithful professors of the name of the Lord Jesus, who having finished their course, sit shining in their promised glory. See there that unapproachable light, that Divine magnificence of the heavenly King! See that resplendent crown of righteousness which decks the heads of all those saints, and is ready to be set on thine, when thou hast happily overcome those spiritual powers with whom thou art still conflicting! See the joyful triumphs of those exulting victors!—the measure of their glory different, yet all full, and the least immeasurable. Lastly, see all this happiness not limited to years nor to millions of years, but commeasured by no less than eternity! And now, my soul, if thou have received the infallible engagement of thy God, "in that having believed, thou art sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of thine inheritance until the full redemption of the purchased possession,"*—if through His infinite mercy, thou be now upon entering into that blessed place and state of immortality, forbear, if thou canst, to be raised above thyself with

* Eph. i. 13, 14.

the joy of the Holy Ghost, to be enlarged towards thy God with a joy unspeakable. See if thou canst now breathe forth anything but praises to thy God!

And now what remains, O my soul, but that thou humbly and faithfully wait, as at the gate of heaven, for a happy entrance at the good pleasure of thy God? I confess that should thy deserts be weighed in the balance of rigorous justice, another place (not to be mentioned without dread) were more due to thee; for thou knowest the wages of sin, even death. But the God of mercy hath prevented thee with infinite compassion; hath not only delivered thee from the nethermost hell, but hath also vouchsafed to translate thee into the kingdom of His dear Son. In Him thou hast the earnest given thee of a blessed possession, the full estating of which I do in all humble awfulness attend. All the few days therefore of my appointed time will I wait at the threshold of grace, till my change come, with a trembling joy, with a longing patience, with a comfortable hope. Only, Lord, I know there is something to be done and borne before I can enter; I must die, ere I can be capable to enjoy that blessed life with Thee; one stroke of Thine anger must be endured in my passage into Thy paradise. And lo, here I am before Thee, ready to embrace the condition: even when Thou pleasest,

let me die once, to be for ever happy. Then, mercifully take my soul from me, who gavest it unto me, and dispose of it where Thou wilt, in the region of immortality. Even so, come Lord Jesus; and take what Thou hast bought; receive my soul to Thy mercy, and crown it with Thy glory!—HALL (BP.).

The Fear of Death combated.

HAST thou been wont, O my body, when the day hath wearied thee, to lie down unwillingly to thy rest? Behold in this sleep there is more quietness, more pleasure of visions, more certainty of waking, more cheerfulness in rising; why then art thou loth to think of laying off thy worn garments and reposing? Hast thou ever seen any bird, which, when the cage was opened, would rather sit still and sing within her grates, than fly forth to her freedom in the woods? or any prisoner in love with his bolts and fetters? Hast thou seen any mariner who hath saluted the sea with songs and the haven with tears? What shall I say to this diffidence, O my soul, that thou art unwilling to think of rest after thy toil, of freedom after thy durance, of the haven after an unquiet passage? . . . Dost thou not hear Solomon say,

he day of death is better than the day of one's
h"? Dost thou not believe him? Or art
u in love with the worse and displeased with
better? If any man could have found a life
thy to be preferred before death, so great a
g must needs have done it. Now, in his very
ne, he commends his coffin. Yea, what wilt
ı say to those heathens who mourned at the
h and feasted at the death of their children?
y knew the miseries of living as well as thou,
happiness of dying they could not know; if
r rejoiced out of a conceit of ceasing to be
erable, how shouldst thou cheer thyself in an
ectation, yea, an assurance, of being happy!
that is the Lord of life, and tried what it was
ie, hath proclaimed them blessed that die in
Lord. Those are blessed, we know, that live
lim; but they rest not from their labours; toil
sorrow are between them and a perfect enjoy-
of that blessedness which they now possess
in hope and inchoation; when death hath
d rest, their happiness is complete. . . .
O my soul, what ails thee to be thus back-
l and fearful? No heart hath more freely
ursed of death in speculation; no tongue
more extolled it in absence. But now that it
me to thy bedside, and hath drawn thy cur-
ı, and takes thee by the hand, and offers thee

service, thou shrinkest inward, and by the paleness of thy face, and disquiet of thine eye, bewrayest amazement at the presence of such a guest.

I am ashamed of this weak irresolution. Whither have all thy serious meditations tended? What hath Christianity done for thee, if thy fears be still heathenish? Is this thine imitation of so many worthy saints of God whom thou hast seen or known entertain violent deaths with smiles and songs? Didst thou think death would have been content with words? Where is thy faith? Yea, where art thou thyself, O my soul? Is heaven worthy of no more thanks, no more joy? Hath thy Maker, thy Redeemer, sent for thee, and art thou loth to go? Rouse up thyself for shame, and if ever thou hast truly believed, shake off this un-Christian diffidence, and address thyself joyfully for thy glory. Yea, O my Lord, it is Thou that must raise up this faint and drooping heart of mine; Thou only canst rid me of this weak and timorous distrust; Thou that sendest for my soul, canst prepare it for Thyself; Thou only canst make the messenger welcome to me. Oh that I could but see Thy face through death! Oh that I could see death, not as it was but as Thou hast made it! Let it be no shame for Thy servant to take up that complaint which thou madest of thy better attendants, "The spirit *indeed* is willing, but the flesh is weak." O Thou

God of spirits, who hast conjoined these, unite them in a desire of their separation, weaken this flesh to receive and encourage, this spirit to invite or to contemn death; and now, as I grow nearer to my home, let me increase in the sense of my joys. I am Thine; save me, O Lord. It was Thou who didst put such courage into Thine ancient and late witnesses, that they either invited or challenged death, and held their persecutors their best friends for letting them loose from these sorrows of flesh. I know Thy hand is not shortened; neither hath any one of them received more proofs of Thy former mercies. Oh let Thy goodness enable me to reach them, in the comfortable steadiness of my passage. Do but draw this veil a little, that I may see my glory, and I cannot but be animated with the desire of it. It was not I, that either made this body for the earth, or this soul for my body, or this heaven for my soul, or this glory of heaven, or this entrance into glory: all is Thine own work. Oh perfect what Thou hast begun, that Thy praise and my happiness may be consummate at once. Great is the Lord, and most worthy to be praised, and His greatness is incomprehensible. Hosanna unto Thee, that dwellest in the highest heavens!

HALL (BP.).

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Instability of the Heart.

NOTHING can be more restless and unstable than my heart, which, as often as it wanders and flows forth in evil thoughts, so often offends my God. My heart is vain, roving, wavering: while it is led by its own choice and lacks the Divine guidance, it has no steadfastness; but, more variable than all things,* it is in countless ways distracted. And while it seeks rest in diverse objects, it yet finds none, but continues unhappy, labouring, without true repose. It disagrees with itself, recoils from its own purposes, changes its volitions and designs, builds up the new, destroys the old, rebuilds what it destroyed. As a millstone is turned rapidly, and rejects nothing, but grinds whatever comes, and if nothing is offered, then consumes *itself*, so is my heart ever in ceaseless motion, and, whether I sleep or watch, still dreams or ruminates. And as sand would damage, and pitch defile, and straw obstruct the millstone, so angry thoughts disturb, impure thoughts stain, vain thoughts fatigue my heart. Thus while it cares not for future joy nor seeks Divine aid, it is far remote from the love of the heavenly, engrossed by what is earthly and perishing. Thus while it shuns the former and is entangled in the latter, variety absorbs, curiosity

* Omni mobili mobilius.

persuades, cupidity attracts, sensuality pollutes, envy torments, anger perturbs, sadness dejects it, and so is it miserably plunged in vices, because it has forsaken that only God and Lord, who would suffice for its healing and welfare. Such are its falls and its miseries when unsustained by Divine grace. And when it examines itself and considers its course, it finds nought but fruitless cogitation, which has fashioned many things out of nothing; deceits of imagination and delusions of the evil one. God commands me to give my heart to *Him;* and because I have been disobedient and resisted His will, I am become also a rebel and a foe to myself. I cannot have rest in myself until I am in willing submission and adherence to Him, and I must be an unwilling slave to self, if His service is refused. If I am not united to God, I am divided and distracted within myself. With Him I cannot be united save by love, nor be submissive to Him except by humility, nor be truly humble, except through His word of truth. It is needful, therefore, that I verily search into my heart, and learn more fully how vile, how frail, and how unsteadfast I am. And when I ascertain my utmost miseries, it is of utmost necessity that I return and cleave to Him, by whom I exist, and without whom I am nothing and can do nothing. —*Bernard (St.).*

God the Sole Source of Renewal.

It would be thought extreme arrogance, blasphemy, and invasion of God's prerogative, for any one to pretend to make the soul and body of a man. And yet perhaps it is no less presumption to pretend to any share in the creation of the spiritual man in Christ. How is it possible I should form the image of God in myself, when I do not know what it is, nor ever shall, till it is actually produced in me? It is well for us that the want of such a previous idea is no hindrance to our reception of it; and for this we have St. Paul's word, who says, that what God worketh in us is exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think. This deserves to be considered by the *narrowers* in all sects and parties.—Adam.

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Thoughts concerning so-called "Fanaticism," or "Enthusiasm."

Modern philosophy, and even nominal Christianity, too frequently rank among fanatics or enthusiasts those who believe in the Divine aid which good men receive from God, and who humbly implore from the Father of lights what

the Scriptures term "wisdom from above," or the succours of the Holy Spirit. We believe in this inspiration, and that it is as necessary to spiritual life, as respiration to animal life. It is remarkable that for this we have not only the testimony of Scripture, but the judgment of the wisest heathens. Bias, one of the "seven sages" of Greece, gave this precept: "Remember that all the good you do, comes principally from the gods." * In Cicero, we read, "There never was a great man without some Divine in-breathing" (afflatu); and again, "If there be amongst mankind, virtue, fidelity, concord, whence could these flow down to earth, but from the supreme powers above?" †

Seneca writes, "God is near thee. He is with thee. Yes, Lucilius, a Holy Spirit resides within us, the observer of good and evil. As we treat Him, so He treats us. There is no good man without God. It is He who inspires grand ideas and exalted designs. In every good man God dwells.‡ A Divine power descendeth hither from above. A heavenly power animates a humble

* Enfield gives the maxim thus, "Whatever good you do, ascribe it to the gods."

† De naturâ Deorum.

‡ Ep. 41. He adds ("Quis Deus incertum est"). This parenthesis would, I think, suffice to disprove the opinion which some have held, that the philosopher was secretly a Christian."

and excellent soul. There is no possessing these advantages without the succours of the Supreme Being."* He exhorts, "Intreat of God a good mind,—good health of soul, then of body. Why not often make these prayers? So live with men, as believing that God sees thee: so speak to God as if men heard thee."† One might even here quote M. de Voltaire, who in one of his happy moments, cites with admiration these words of Confucius: "Heaven hath given me virtue; man cannot hurt me;" and the Orphic verse, "Adore the Maker of all; He is one; all owe their existence to Him; He acts in them, and by them." Now, if God acts in beings in general, why not specially in a virtuous man, whose soul is the most noble instrument of the Father of spirits—a temple the most worthy of the Divinity. Strange that people aided by the gospel cannot discern what pagans saw, but ridicule truths which even they acknowledged! Plutarch goes still further than the Roman philosophers. He cites Homer as declaring Divine influences and inspirations, and confutes the charge that this poet sought thus to disprove the liberty of man's will. He says, "Homer never introduces the Deity as taking away, but as rousing into action the freedom of the will. He *does* not represent the heavenly power as pro-

* Ep. 41. † Ep. 10.

; the resolution, but ideas which lead to reby not rendering the acts in any respect ntary, but giving occasion to such as are ary and superadding confidence and good f accomplishment."* Full of aversion for ınd living Christianity, these admirers of ɔean dogmas will not perhaps allow to real ians what they allow to Voltaire, the prayer close of his "Law of Nature." "O God, wn; O God, whom all declare, my heart wander if not filled with Thee!" Some ɜed Christians have not the candour to that if God sometimes inspires with good .ents those who fight *against* the gospel, tainly can inspire those who *receive* it.

may contrast with the self-sufficiency of ɜau, the piety of Zaleucus, who in his laws Locrians, writes, "If an evil genius entice ɔ sin, he must fly to the foot of the altars nplore heaven to banish far from him the ɜnius." Another heathen writer, Hierocles, n his commentary on Pythagoras, "Never y hand to a work before thou hast implored ds to finish what thou art about to begin;" ;, "we stand in continued need of divine t to *co-operate* with us and accomplish what uest." Would we then acquire active virtue

* *of Coriolanus.* Wrangham Plut., vol. ii., 299.

we must pray: but in praying we must act, and see that in our actions we constantly regard the Divinity.

O you who expect, with Rousseau, to merit heaven by a heap of contradictions, a complication of grand truths and glaring errors,—at least respect true philosophy, and do not cast your veil of antichristian opinions over the truths of the ancient sages, which shone forth even amidst thick shades of heathen darkness.*—FLETCHER.

* Abridged from "Thoughts on (so-called) Fanaticism or Enthusiasm," translated from the French of the Rev. John Fletcher, of Madeley.

Mr. Fletcher might have added a passage from the noble hymn of Cleanthes the Stoic, (300 B.C.).

"Great Jove, all bounteous, though with thunder arm'd,
Us mortals free from direful ignorance;
Expel it from each soul; grant us to 'attain
Wisdom, whereby thou rightly rulest all,
That we may worthily adore thy name."

The whole poem is in Cudworth Intell. Syst., vol. ii., 354, edit. Birch, in the original Greek, with a metrical Latin version.

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Needless Self-indulgence in Sleep reproved.

A PERSON whose conscience did not continue to sleep after he was himself awake, would be humbled and mortified by being brought into comparison, after having consumed several hours in needless sleep, with a man who has given those same hours to devotion (religious reading and meditation).

Here, it might be said to him, is a man that has been in the most elevated condition to which the mind is permitted in this state to rise, while you have been in the humblest to which it is compelled to subside. He has conversed with the Original Being, while you have been unconscious of your own. He has fixed his contemplations on the idea of Deity till it has seemed to absorb as a little thing the idea of the universe, as the ancient deluge overwhelmed a city or a grove; while you have been, and chosen to be, in a literal and perfect sense, "without God in the world." His mind has gone forth into the temple of all space, and worshipped in harmony with whatever are the noblest created beings it contains; while yours has been retained and absorbed in the sole service of keeping a diminutive piece of matter warm. Or if, besides performing this office, *it has been* busy amidst a fantastic crowd

of images, they all are vanished away, while the mind has had just time to follow them with a momentary glance of scorn, as it was recovering its rational state; on the contrary, the ideas on which this devout man has been exercising his mind impress their importance exactly in proportion to the clearness of his reason, and if he could be ten times more rational they would appear ten times more important. The highest realities which can be the objects of thought have an indistinctness and a remoteness which prevent them, even when acknowledged to be of momentous interest, from making a powerful impression on a mind that does not in a very formal and deliberate manner fix its attention on them. This devout man, by having applied the whole effort of his faculties, has drawn on his mind during these hours the whole force of those realities. His mind has therefore been drawn into that stricter connection with the greatest order of things to which it is related, which will tend to prevent his sinking into an exclusive connection with the inferior order to which also he is related; while you, having been quite absent from all thought, till the world requires you to be present to its business, are going to engage in the inferior department of your concerns with a *mind* but little prepared to maintain a proper

regard to the superior. He has been acquiring a more decided conception of the grand purpose of life, and is bringing this with him as a rule in conformity to which he will select both his ends and his means; while you, having divested yourself of the very consciousness, during the time that he has been fixing the great purpose of life, must now devote yourself to mere action without having any general and enlarged principle of action. He has been making a solemn pledge that all his agency shall be of the nature of service to the Supreme Master, whose assistance therefore he has ventured to supplicate, and now ventures to hope for; while you have to acknowledge that if your exertions be accepted by that Power, it will be more than you have intended; if His assistance is imparted, it will be more than you have thought it worth while to crave. And finally, this devout man has been employing a short portion of his time in contemplating the shortness and uncertainty of his whole time in the present state, and most fervently seeking to avert all the just causes of apprehension concerning its close; and you perhaps are persuaded that this one exercise of this one morning may contribute much to that great object; and yet you, notwithstanding you are perhaps haunted by the gloomiest kind of appre-

hensions, would rather continue to be
in them, and to see them darkening in
deeper shade before you, than begin t
from idle slumbers the portion of tim
employed in earnest devotion, would
them for ever. If your conscience w
proper state of sensibility, you would b
to have been, even for one week, in ha
contrasted with an example which you
But what then do you think of the co
the fact should be, that he has spent in
hours which you have consumed in sle
day for several years past? And wh
reasonable to anticipate as the final c
in the result, if each of these habits s
tinue to the end of your lives?—JOHN FO

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A Good Conscience described.

IN order to the very existence of a good co
as well as to continuance of it, the conti
fluence of the Spirit of God is absolutely
Accordingly the apostle John declares to
lievers of all ages, "Ye have an unction
Holy One, and know all things,"—all thi

are needful to your having "a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man." So he adds, "Ye have no need that any one should teach you," otherwise "than as that anointing teacheth you." That anointing clearly teacheth us these three things:—first, the true meaning of God's word; secondly, our own tempers and lives; bringing all our thoughts, words and actions to remembrance; and thirdly, the agreement of all with the commandments of God. St. Paul describes a good conscience in various ways. In one place he simply terms it a "good conscience towards God," in another, as "void of offence toward God and toward men;" again, more largely, "our rejoicing is the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity (with a single eye) and in godly sincerity we have had our conversation in the world;" and he adds, "not by fleshly wisdom," commonly called prudence (this never did nor ever can produce such an effect), "but by the grace of God," which alone is sufficient to work this in any child of man.

Nearly allied to this (if it be not the same placed in another view, or a particular branch of it) is a tender conscience. One of a tender conscience is exact in observing any deviation from the word of God, whether in thought, word, or work; and immediately feels remorse and self-

condemnation for it. And his constant prayer is,

"O that my tender soul may fly, the first abhorr'd approach of ill;
Quick as the apple of an eye, the slightest touch of sin to feel."

Sometimes, however, this excellent quality, tenderness of conscience, is carried to an extreme. We find some who fear where no fear is; who are continually condemning themselves without cause; imagining some things to be sinful which Scripture nowhere condemns, and others to be their duty which it nowhere enjoins. This is properly termed a scrupulous conscience, and is a sore evil. It is highly expedient to yield to it as little as possible; rather is it a matter of earnest prayer that you be delivered from this sore evil, and may recover a sound mind; to which nothing would contribute more than the converse of a pious and judicious friend. But the extreme opposite to this is obviously far more dangerous. A thousand times more dangerous is a hardened conscience, which can violate the plain command of God without self-condemnation.

Many instances of this deplorable stupor we meet with; even among people that suppose themselves to have no small share of religion. A person is doing something which Scripture

clearly forbids. You ask, "How do you dare do this? and are answered with perfect unconcern, "Oh, my heart does not condemn me." I reply, "So much the worse. I would to God it did. You would then be in a safer state than you are now. It is a dreadful thing to be condemned by the word of God and yet not to be condemned by your own hearts."—JOHN WESLEY.

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Privileges of Friendship with God.

A GREAT privilege is facility of access to Him. There are times in the life even of the unconverted, when he longs for this,—but the conditions of the privilege are wanting. When, however, my name is written in the Book of Life as "a friend of God," I have free access to His presence at all times. Through physical infirmity, or the impression of recent sin, I may not be aware of the privilege, but still it is mine. If I wake in the night I am still with Him. I have liberty to pour out my awed thoughts to Him in still and fearless reverence, and my gentle thoughts in confidential love, and my troubled thoughts in prayer, and my gladsome thoughts in the songs of the Spirit. If I wish it, when I travel, I travel in Divine society; when I walk in the midst of trouble, He

revives me; when I droop in the valley of the shadow of death, He comforts me; when I am engaged in no defined acts of devotion—when not a voice is whispered nor a look reflected, "Tender thoughts within me burn, to feel a Friend is nigh." When I go out into the solitudes of nature, I feel around me a thinking silent life, and "all the air is love." "Surely God is in the place." I hear His voice in the song of the winds and in the chime of the waters. The earth rocks to His tread in the tempest; at His smile "the wilderness breaks forth into singing." When I return to my home, He who made "the desert rejoice," makes "the solitary place glad." I can find Him anywhere, at all times, and find Him as my Friend: in the workshop, in the loft all hung with cobwebs, behind the screen of the shaded lane, I can find a "holy of holies;" and solitude of spirit, where I can find no solitude of place, is often to me "none other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven." This is not fiction, it is not poetry, unless we mean by poetry fine, deep, delicate truth. It *is* that,—it is experiment—it is life. Communication of *secrets* from God is another privilege. These belong rather to spirit than to system; to religion as a sentiment, than to religion as a science. Before we are partakers of a Divine nature, all the experiences of the Divine life are

secrets. How a Christian feels when he says—"When I am weak then am I strong"—is a secret. The enjoyment of peace in tumult, and glorying in tribulation, is a secret. Felt forgiveness is a secret; joy flowing from it is a secret: "a new song that no man can learn save those who are redeemed from the earth." A sense of the infinite, a keen vivacity of thought respecting "things not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," these are secrets. Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance,—in their refinement and divinity, are secrets. All these secrets God communicates when we become His friends. And all this is perfectly reasonable. An object can only be seen by the appropriate faculty; while that is wanting, the object is a secret. No glance of genius, no rapid action of intelligence, no magic of the soul can see a colour, smell a fragrance, or feel a physical force. Intellect must see intellect; bodily organs, bodily objects; a spiritual eye, spiritual truth. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." But with the new instincts, preferences, and principles, the creation of which forms part of the condition of friendship with *God, the things* of God are seen.—"Eye

hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him, but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." "Old things pass away, behold all things are become new;" with our new perceptive faculties we see actings of wisdom and mercy in the histories of life which were before concealed, meanings start and sparkle from what were before blank pages of the Bible; secrets are turned into revelations, and we who once moved in mystery, now walk as children of the light.

Another high privilege of the friendship of God is its *constancy*. Various circumstances have changed your human fellowship. Some in whom you once confided are not what you thought they were. Peculiar excitements, outside life, the romance of the spirit, concealed the real character, as the wreath of lighted and tinctured cloud concealed the savage rock; but now the charm is fled, the colour gone, and you see only what is cold and unappealing as the ice, the snow, and the rugged stone. The companions of your age are not always the same as the companions of your youth. There is often a change from the warm affection to the shy advance, the timid notice, the polite formality. And when faithful friends are faithful still, perhaps they live in an-

other country, or in another world. You miss the "watchers," the "holy ones," who were the guides of your youth, or the sharers of your matured affection; you have missed one after the other from the place that once knew them;—have seen the gentle fading of nature, the slow gradations of decay. With awe—with the creep of a strange panic chill over every faculty,—you have lifted the melancholy drapery of death, to gaze on the sad ruin, the still and stony brow, the dim, unconscious, transformed face of your friend. You have heard "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust," pronounced over what was once lighted up with thought and passion and sensibility. You have felt the crowded solitude of life, the crushing sense of desolation. You have walked for a time in the "valley of the shadow of death." For you the star has lost its sparkle, the flower its beauty, the spring its song. An old man must feel pensively when he thinks of the many changes, even in the outward world, which he has witnessed since his youth. He must have mournful thoughts indeed, when he reviews the history of changes in the fellowships of spirit. "Joseph is not, Simeon is not;" and death is about to "take Benjamin away." "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." "Demas hath forsaken me."—But in God he may have a friend "who changeth not." Man forgets

to love: but "whom God loveth, He loveth to the end."

Be anxious to know Him better. If you value a friend, you will wish to know him, to know his memories of the past, his ideas of the future, his experiences, his course of study, his plans of life. With regard to your heavenly Friend, you should have the same wish intensified to a degree which will allow no limitation. You should "count all things but loss for the excellency of this knowledge." Be anxious to take His thoughts into your own minds. Study with reverence everything on which He has left His handwriting—the leaves of nature—the many pictured page of life; His revelations to man as a *creature*, but especially His revelations to man as a *sinner*. Pray to Him more. If indeed we are the friends of God, we shall be drawn to prayer as by a natural law, a law of the new nature. It will not be a dictate of reason merely, nor a conscientious effort, nor a mechanical habit, but an impulse of life. Seek to be more *like* Him. Likeness to Him will be needful to prove the fact of friendship. Hence the proverbial sentence, "Show me a man's company, and I will show you his character." Commune with littleness and your spirit will be little, with greatness and it will be great; with the beautiful in thought and feeling, and you will be transfigured into the same

beauty. Light glorifies what it touches. It tints the flower, it fires the gem, it colours the scenery of nature. Dwell with the infinite Light, and there will be light in your thoughts, light in your affections, in your words, in your life; and you will be lights of the world, making its dark places radiant, its "rough places plain," and its "solitary places glad."—REV. C. STANFORD.

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Rules Concerning Conversation.

"LET every man be swift to hear." Let it be considered a fixed and ascertained truth that your neighbour, however he may be inferior to you in some points of station and attainment, is able to impart to you some information which you do not possess. The knowledge of books and an extensive acquaintance with literature, may easily consist with a profound ignorance of common things, external nature, or the current intelligence of the day. This current intelligence, if it concern worthy subjects, is a legitimate part of the great fund of knowledge; and a man who has mastered it is so far forth a better informed man than he who has not. The events of the day—those which affect our country and the world at large—are the elements of modern history. Let it be assumed,

then, that every man has some piece of knowledge to impart to us, which we do not possess. And this being the case, let us when either casually or by design, we enter into company, set ourselves to the finding out what that something is. Possibly it is nothing in our own line, nothing that is to be found in books, nothing connected with any ambitious department of knowledge. And therefore you think it is not worth your listening to, much less your casting about how you may extract it. Oh, the narrowness of the human mind, and the contemptible vanity of the human heart! Alas, such knowledge, though it moves in a humble sphere, may deal with subjects which affect the wellbeing of the human race more intimately than any sublimer study. The sublime processes of nature are not the most essential processes. It is not the flash of the lightning, nor the trembling of the avalanche reverberated by a thousand hills, which are the most potent agencies of nature for good; but rather the distillation of the little dewdrop on the blade of grass, and the noiseless stealing down of the early and the latter rain. And the sublime processes of art are not the most essential processes. It may be much questioned, whether the manufacture of a balloon is half as serviceable to mankind as the construction of a drain. And, similarly, thy brother's humbler

knowledge may pertain to matters much more essential than the more aspiring flight of wisdom. An effort should be made to extract from those with whom the occasions of life bring us into contact, that portion of useful knowledge, which out of the common stock they have appropriated to themselves.

What are the subjects in which, by his circumstances and position, he is likely to be most interested? How can I draw him on to speak of them? If these questions were uppermost in the mind, and if conversation were pursued in the spirit of them, it would not be so barren a thing as it often is. The sense of unprofitableness which so often oppresses, after an hour spent in company, would be dissipated. Let us make the experiment whether the motto, "Swift to hear," may not furnish a remedy. Discarding every notion of self-conceit, let us regard ourselves in conversation as learners in quest of something which will furnish us better for the different occasions of life. We shall succeed, no doubt, clumsily at first, better by a little practice, by God's grace well in time. But be our success what it may, we must, as Christians, absolutely renounce all vapid words which have in them no salt of wit or wisdom. We are not at liberty, plainly not, to talk for talking's sake, *to say* something at all hazards,

to throw out words, without the desire either to amuse or instruct. The warning against "idle" words must be heeded, at whatever expense of freedom in conversation. For He uttered the warning whose lips are full of grace; and at our peril may we slight even the least of His commandments.—DEAN GOULBURN, D.D.

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The Christian as a "Builder" encouraged and warned.

EVERY Christian is in himself a temple, "a temple of God," as well as a separate or single stone in the general edifice. He has to build up, on the foundation of faith, all that is holy in personal character. "Other foundation can no man lay," as the inward basis of Christian virtue, "than that which is laid—Jesus Christ." Religious faith,—faith which accepts a personal Redeemer and a personal redemption, is the support and groundwork of Christian excellence. That excellence, however, is reared and perfected by sore labour and slow degrees. "Let every man," therefore, "take heed *how* he buildeth;"—after what model and with what materials. The aims and purposes, the motives and ends, which influence the soul—

the walk and conversation, the practical habitudes that appear in the life—all that properly constitutes *character*—the character of the inward and of the outward man; *this* is the building which individual Christians have to labour to erect. Now it is perfectly obvious, that there may be great differences in different men, as to the idea they entertain of what they are to do, and the proper method by which it is to be done. In the materials that constitute personal character, there may be the solid and the durable, and the chaffy and worthless. There may be the gold and silver, the precious stones and resplendent ornaments of a Divine virtue, or there may be the wood and hay, the straw and the stubble of an earthly life. Not only by these respectively, may the saint and the sinner, the true Christian and the hollow and hypocritical be distinguished, but a *sincerely believing* man may be so ignorant, so careless, so low in his standard, and so practically inattentive to his "high calling," as either to be satisfied with what falls far short of religious goodness, or intentionally to build his allotted work with foreign materials and untempered mortar; not only without being aware of his mistake, imagining all the time that he is acting consistently with his duty and profession, but, in some cases, actually regarding with highest esti-

mation, and accumulating with hugest labour, what the first spark of the light of eternity will burn to ashes! Just as it is incumbent then on the official builders, to take care in their relations to others that they teach nothing but the true, and sanction and encourage none but the good,—so is it incumbent on the private Christian, to take care, in relation to himself, that he do the same; that is, that he have just views of what it *is* that is to be built up on the foundation of his faith, as "holy living," and that he strenuously endeavour to embody and realize this Divine "idea" in the positive habitudes of his daily life. And still further, just as in the end, the work of one builder will abide and he "have a reward," and that of another will be "burnt," and he "suffer loss," so also will it be with individual Christians, according as they may be found, at the day of reckoning, to have traded with their talents with intelligence and skill, or to have misunderstood, or abused, or buried them in the earth. When the Lord is revealed at the last day, the event will be productive of various feelings even in the circle of the *saved* themselves. Some will rejoice with instantaneous exultation, and be "found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless,"—while others will "be ashamed before Him at His coming,"—*awake* to apprehension, and "saved as by fire."

St. Peter earnestly exhorts, "Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue (rather, *energy*), and to energy knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness, charity." As if to say, Be careful to cultivate and display, and to lead forth, as with constant gladness, in harmonious order, in all their becoming grace and beauty, those virtues that are to attend upon and adorn a religious life: and at the close of thy course thou shalt be met by an angelic choir, who shall hail thy approach to the Divine land with ready gratulation;—thus shalt thou "enter into the joy of thy Lord," with choral symphonies and solemn pomp—as one whom He shall "delight to honour." There is the abundant entrance into the kingdom of God; and there is the getting in with something like difficulty. One man may be conducted to his "joy and crown" through thronging multitudes, amidst outstretched hands and reverberating hosannas—while another shall advance with hesitating step, be glad to get an entrance without observation—tremulous with a thankful though shaded joy that he is saved at all. "Therefore (writes St. Paul), be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour shall not be in

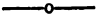
vain in the Lord." . . . If these passages mean what they *say*, that meaning is a truth; as such, it must be in harmony with all other truth, whether we can perceive that harmony or not; and with the like condition, simply as a separate piece of truth, it is practically binding on the conscience of the Church. We firmly believe in justification by faith—in the pardon of the sinner on the ground, exclusively, of Christ's glorious redemptive act. A thing, this, purely gratuitous, in itself incapable of degrees; admitting therefore of no modification in different individuals in consequence of differences in them, but conferred upon all alike, in virtue of their union by faith with Him whose work is the Divine reason for the blessing being bestowed at all. Doubtless, whether we can see it or not, there is a harmony between this justification by faith and a judgment by works. In some way or other, there is a "prize" of our "high calling," as well as a "gift" of God through Jesus Christ. There is a "crown" in relation to which some may so "*run*" as to "obtain," and some so, that another shall "take it." There is a being saved—and nothing more; saved because *on* the foundation, saved, as it were with difficulty, like "a brand plucked from the burning," saved so as by "fire;" and there is a being saved "abundantly," saved and something more; saved

and distinguished; distinguished, because *to* the foundation has been added *that* which the Master will "delight to honour."

But whatever the glory may be which shall invest the loftier orders in the world of light, it will be something that shall flow, as by natural sequence, from the previous spiritual condition of their minds. Mere power *could* not, perhaps, confer heavenly distinctions on minds to whom they would be uncongenial, or as wielded by wisdom, it would not;—or would not, if it could, employ itself in creating such congeniality. The same law will rule in heaven that we recognise here,—the law that makes it impossible to enjoy any outward conspicuous honour, that does not harmonize with the soul's internal consciousness.

The subject ought to teach us a lesson of love. "If any man build on the foundation, wood, hay, stubble, his work shall be burnt; he shall suffer loss; but—he himself shall be *saved*." Let us think of this; and let us thank God that in spite of much with which we may be offended in religious systems and communities, there may be true souls and loving hearts belonging to them all. In some places they may "teach for doctrines the commandments of men," and darken the Divine word "by their traditions;" in others,

there may be serious speculative errors held in connection with essential truth; many are the mistakes in respect to the real nature of religion by which people may be misled, so that their solicitude and diligence may come to be expended on the veriest trifles,—their lives consumed in gathering and accumulating chips and straw, while they are taught to think that they are all the while "laying up treasure in heaven." Yet, they may be "living stones" on "Christ the Foundation," though not cut and squared according to the pattern used for ourselves; and they may have within them, as the ground of their character, like precious faith with us, in spite of the errors of judgment or education, of crude perception or tyrannous circumstance, which may have led them to disfigure what they build upon it. They will have "loss" enough at last; add not to their deprivation by withholding from them now your charitable love.—BINNEY (REV. T., D.D.).



Christian Fruitfulness.

"I WILL be as the dew unto Israel," is God's gracious promise to a penitent and returning people. There must then be points of analogy between the descent of the dew upon the ground, and the gracious comings and manifestations of God to His people.

The dew falls quietly and gently,—it falls copiously;—it is very refreshing:—what is perhaps most important of all, the dew is fertilizing. The prophet dwells on this at some length, and evidently with much delight. This silent, copious, refreshing agent works *fruitfulness* out of all growing things. He speaks of the growth of the lily, fairest of flowers, with its snow-white, bell-like leaves; of the olive-tree famous for its greenness as well as for its oil; of the cedar of Lebanon, the very monarch of the vegetable kingdom; of the revival of the corn, which carries in its heart the very staff of human life; and of the spreading vine, with its rich clusters of grapes. All these under the influence of the dew, grow in beauty, strength, and above all, in *fruitfulness*. They are thus aided in the accomplishment of the very end of their existence. And when God is as the dew unto Israel, His final end is that the plants of His right hand's planting may become *fruitful*. Our

divine Master speaks much and very solemnly on this subject of fruitfulness. We are "chosen" for this, "ordained" to this end, "that we should go and bring forth fruit, and that our fruit should remain." He tells us that we shall then attain the last end of our being, and of all being. Our Father will be "glorified" when we "bear much fruit." He tells us that each unfruitful branch in Him, the living Vine, must be cut off and cast into the fire:—that each fruitful branch must be "pruned that it may bring forth more fruit." In one of His parables we see the axe lifted up against the barren fig-tree, and only stayed by the cry of the keeper of the vineyard, "Lord, let it alone this year also!" Yes! He who sends the dew comes with and after His gift, as the man came to the fig-tree, seeking fruit,—He longs to see us, reflecting His image, happy in His work, glorifying His Father. We ought to come to ourselves as He does, "seeking fruit." Whatever He seeks and wishes to find in us, we ourselves should earnestly desire; His supreme question at this moment is, "What fruit?" and surely it should be ours. The question is not so much, "What seasons can you remember of quietness, copiousness, refreshing in the Lord?" but rather, "What fruit have you remaining now?" Ah, how little! how little of the clear, mellowed fruit of grace have we hanging

visibly on our lives, or stored in our hearts! We are not altogether barren. Indeed, we could point to many things inward and outward, regarding which we could say to the Master,—But for Thee and Thy gracious culture these could never have been. And we could perhaps point to a greater number which are only yet in germ and blossom, and which may, through grace, come to be full ripe fruit in time, and enrich the harvest of some other day. While therefore we confess ourselves in sorrow to be "unprofitable servants," we turn to the promise both gratefully and hopefully, grateful for the measure of gracious fulfilment which has come to us; hopeful that a large fulfilment is coming. We gladly call to mind that we are not straitened in Him, and that we never shall be; that we are still to be fed from a fulness deeper than our need, higher than our thought, and even flowingly responsive to our prayer—a fulness which space cannot comprehend, which time cannot lessen, and which a Divine and infinite Redeemer alone can display. "I will be as the dew unto Israel." That simple promise may be regarded by us as a condensed expression of the whole everlasting covenant of God. The heart-substance, the pith and marrow of the covenant are there. If we lay our hand on it in faith as we look to the future, we have all the securities of grace in our grasp,

and all the fountains of blessing opened upon our souls. With hand on this promise we cannot but expect that a richer fruitfulness will one day come, when we shall not be ashamed to say, "Let our Beloved come into His garden." And perhaps it may be well to remember, lest we should be needlessly discouraged, lest we should be ungrateful through ignorance,—that Christian fruitfulness is a manifold and various thing. It is not all of one kind. One life is not meant to be exactly like another life. Each is cast in its own type, and when the life is cast, the type or mould, as has been said, is broken. Of course it is broken, because it was composed in part of circumstances which never were before, nor ever can be again.

Let *each* "planted" soul rejoice to feel rooted in Him. And then let each grow freely according to His will—not fearing, but gladly daring to branch and blossom, and fructify, according to the law of individual life. The lily, the olive tree, the corn, the vine, the cedar,—all these are growing in God's garden! and there is room and dew for them all. The utilitarian Christian would say, "The lily! we cannot have that here. 'Tis only a thing of beauty; as fleeting as it is fair. It gives little smell, it yields no fruit. It must be removed to make room for the *corn*." "Not so,"

saith the great Husbandman; "Let the lily grow; it blooms for me. The beauty of that fair and delicate life is my beauty. These gentle ones who cannot speak much, who cannot work much for me, who cannot endure much hardness, who are constitutionally, and by condition, ill prepared to meet many of the roughnesses of life in my service, can yet live truly to me in the places where they grow. Those parts of the garden are sheltered. I have planted them there, and there I will visit and protect them. Come, behold the lilies, *how* they grow; for Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." The tasteful and delicate Christian, coming up to the cedar, would say, "That cannot be here. It might adorn the wild wastes of nature, but it is *not* fit for the inclosures of grace. We must, at least, if it continues, lop off its branches, and cut away some of its roots, and try to soften its stony fibre, and teach it to grow more tenderly." "Not so," again saith the great Husbandman; "I have room for the cedar, too; soil for its roots, air for its highest branches, and uses for its hardness; and time to spare from immeasurable eternity for its thousand years of life. Let those rough, hard ones who cannot shine in gentleness, who cannot weep in sympathy, who cannot yield in love, who, following the bent of their nature, can only grow up

in strength—*let* them grow, let them vanquish the storms and pass through the seasons of life with but little visible change: each according to its nature, and yet all under the influence of grace. I have planted, and I will keep them all." We have only then to seek to yield the fruit that is proper to our own nature, and possible in the circumstances of our own life. We are not only at liberty, but it is our duty to put aside unused, models and plans of life and usefulness which are thrust on us by others. But if we do this in a spirit of loyalty to the Master, we shall be the more anxious to grow in what is to us the true "grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour." And if we are thus true *to Him*—watchful, responsive, receptive, communicative, ready—then will it matter but little in what department of the vegetable kingdom we find the best type and symbol of our life; whether we are like the lily in its beauty, the olive-tree in its greenness, the vine with its clusters, the corn with its bounteous burden, or the cedar with its shaggy strength;—the promise will shed its benediction on us all. Our gracious God will be "as the dew unto Israel."—RALEIGH (REV. A., D.D.).

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Faith Conquering Doubts.

God, by the gospel, taught us the way of salvation; but God did not teach us, by any of His revelations, that which might have gratified curiosity, but which it could not assist duty, to know concerning Himself.

More than this; every fresh accession of light not only leaves a fringe and border of darkness around it, but makes us more sensible of the extent and of the density of that darkness. Therefore it is that many questions trouble an inquiring Christian, which do not seem to have troubled an inquiring Jew. The very fact of knowing so much, makes us impatient of not knowing more. A thousand questions remain unanswered concerning the power of God, the justice of God, and the goodness of God, which all the more exercise the patience or even burden the conscience of a Christian, because God has told him so much, and because Christ has come to be the Light of the world, and the Justifier of the ways of God to man. Now faith—the sight of the invisible—Christian faith, which is the sight of the invisible God in Christ—must needs have an office to discharge in reference to these difficulties and these perplexities. It was so from the beginning. The apostles themselves felt this when they were first

called to believe in the possibility, in the fact, of a resurrection: "When they saw Him, they worshipped Him, but some doubted." Did they not worship? Did doubt preclude faith? Rather faith triumphed in and over doubting; and they who could not explain, and they who could not understand, yet felt themselves to be in the presence of a mightier and more convincing reality; and even where they could not see, they could adore and they could believe still. So it is now. A man keenly sensible of difficulties—a man on whose very soul lie the burdens of a thousand unreconciled contradictions—a man who feels that he would give all that he possesses for one ray of solution and of explanation,—is no hypocrite and no unbeliever, if he still calls Christ his Saviour, offers before Him all the powers, and dedicates to Him all the capacities of his being. His doubts are as nothing in comparison with his evidences. Is he to give up Christ and go back into the outer darkness of sin unforgiven, and heaven unopened, because he cannot fathom the deep abyss of a Trinity in Unity, or combine in one logical theory the two opposite necessities, of a responsible man and an Omnipotent God? If he can find a lamp for his feet and a light for his steps, if he can find a Saviour worthy of his devotion, and a Spirit omnipresent to guide, he must be content to wait for

explanations till he reaches a land where there is neither temptation nor weakness; a life in which the intellect may expand itself in God's presence, and the soul drink in knowledge at the fountain-head of God's truth. In the meantime faith triumphs amidst doubtings; and when Christ asks, "Will ye also go away?" is content to answer, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."—VAUGHAN (REV. C. J., D.D.).

PRAYERS ANCIENT AND MODERN.

Basil.

ETERNAL God, original and primal light, Creator of all, source of compassion, sea of goodness, inscrutable abyss of condescension, let the light of Thy countenance beam upon our souls! Shine in our hearts, true Sun of righteousness, and fill us with Thy lovely likeness! Teach us at all times to think and speak of Thy sovereignty, and continually acknowledge Thee as our Lord and Benefactor! Direct the works of our hands according to Thy will, and lead us in the right way, that we may be able to do what is pleasing in Thy sight, so that by us who are unworthy, Thy holy name may be honoured, the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, to whom alone belong glory, honour, and worship for ever. Amen.

BASIL (ST.).

—o—

Calvin.

GRANT, Almighty Lord, that because by our worldliness we are so bound down to earth, that even when Thou stretchest forth Thy hands to us we

cannot attain to Thee, grant that being quickened by Thy Spirit, we may learn to uplift our minds unto Thyself; striving against our indolence or sloth, till, by closer access, Thou shalt make Thyself more intimately known to us, so that at length we may arrive at that fruition of full and perfect glory, which is laid up for us in heaven by Christ our Lord. Amen.—CALVIN.

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Bossuet.

I ABANDON and resign myself, O my God, unto Thee!—To Thy unity, that I may be made one with Thee; to Thine infinity and immensity incomprehensible, that I may there lose and forget self; to Thy perfect wisdom, that I may be ruled by Thy designs and not according to my own thoughts; to Thy eternal decrees, known and unknown, that I may acquiesce in them, as being ever alike just; to Thine eternity, that it may be my blessedness; to Thine omnipotence, that I may always be in Thy hand; to Thy paternal goodness, that at Thine appointed hour Thou mayst receive my spirit to Thy arms; to Thy justice, so far as it justifies the ungodly and the transgressor, to the end that from being such Thou wilt make him just and holy! It is only to the justice which

punishes that I will not commit myself, for this would be an abandonment to the condemnation which I merit; and yet, Lord, that justice, like all Thy other attributes, is holy and must not be deprived of its sacrifice. I must therefore surrender myself to it also—but behold my Redeemer, Christ, presents Himself that I may yield to it in Him and through Him! Amen.—BOSSUET.

—o—

Baxter.

O MY God, vouchsafe to a sinner yet more of the Spirit of Thy Son, who came on earth to draw up earthly minds to God, and to open heaven to all believers!

I beg earnestly, for the sake of my Redeemer, the Spirit of life and consolation, to show me the reconciled face of God, and unite all my affections to Christ, and draw up this dark, drowsy soul to love and long to be with Thee! Lord Jesus, scatter all these mists! O Thou Sun of righteousness, make Thy way into this benighted mind! I know, my Lord, heaven is not far from me, no not an hour's journey to a separate soul. How quick the communion of my eyes with the distant sun! and couldst Thou not show me heaven in a moment? Is not faith a seeing grace?

If animated by Thee, I can "see the invisible God," the New Jerusalem, the innumerable company of angels; the spirits of the just made perfect; without Thee, I can do nothing and am nothing. Remove this film that sin hath gathered, and my enlightened soul will see Thy glory. I know this veil of flesh must also be rent, before I shall see Thee with open face, and know my fellow-citizens above as I am known. It is not heaven on earth I am asking, but that I may see it from mount Nebo, and have the pledge and the firstfruits; that my faith and hope may kindle love and desire, and make me run my race with patience, and live and die in the joy which becomes an heir of heaven. But if my part in joy on earth must not increase, let it make me the more weary of this dungeon, and more fervently longing for the day when all my desires shall be satisfied, and my soul be filled with Thy light and love! Amen.
—RICHARD BAXTER.

—o—

Kepler.

THOU, who by the light of nature hast kindled in us the longing after the light of Thy grace, in order to raise us to the light of Thy glory, thanks to Thee, Creator and Lord, that Thou lettest me

rejoice in Thy works. Lo I have done the work of my life with that intellect which Thou hast given! I have recorded to men the glory of Thy works as far as my mind could comprehend their infinite majesty. My senses were awake to search, as far as I could, with purity and faithfulness. If I, a worm before Thine eyes, and born in the bonds of sin, have brought forth anything that is unworthy of Thy counsels, inspire me with Thy Spirit, that I may correct it. If by the wonderful beauty of Thy works I have been led into boldness, if I have sought my own honour among men as I advanced in the work which was destined to *Thine* honour, pardon me in kindness and charity, and by Thy grace grant that my teaching may be to Thy glory and the welfare of all men. Praise ye the Lord, ye heavenly harmonies, and ye that understand the new harmonies, praise the Lord! Praise God, O my soul, as long as I live. From Him, through Him, and in Him is all—the material as well as the spiritual—all that we know, and all that we know not yet, for there is much to do that is yet undone.*—KEPLER.

* Quoted by Professor Max Müller, who says Kepler was "persecuted by theologians as a heretic." The great astronomer was in fact banished the University of Tübingen for professing the Reformed religion; but was afterwards recalled.—EDIT.

Martin Luther.

THOU knowest, O my Father and Lord, that as for me there is nothing good in me, not even a hair of my head: all belongs to the abyss of destruction. Why should I multiply words on it? But, gracious Father, I pray evermore, let me be what I will, so pray I still and will entreat continually, that Thou wilt not fix on me Thy view and inspection—wilt not turn on me Thine eyes, even on such a transgressor as I am, else I were lost and ruined, even were a hundred thousand worlds on my side;—but this I implore, Lord,—if Thou wilt look on me, turn Thine eyes also and direct Thy view to the face of Thy most beloved Son, Thine Anointed, my Mediator, High Priest, and Intercessor, my Saviour and my Redeemer! For His sake I pray Thee, loving Father, show Thy tender mercy to me, and be pleased for Thy beloved Son's sake, to grant me a happy end, and a joyful resurrection. For the sake of that precious blood which He with such tenderness poured forth on the cross for the forgiveness of my sins, I pray, heavenly Father, for the sake of that same precious blood-shedding, let not my sins (more than I can recount or remember) be my destruction, but cause it in Thy fathomless loving-kindness to produce the fruit and effects for which it was

ordained by Thee from eternity, and for which it was shed by Thy dear Son, even that Thou wouldst let me attain the forgiveness of my sins! At what hour or moment therefore Thou shalt come and call, to summon the soul which Thou hast given me hence away, I ever implore Thee, gracious Father, let this soul and spirit be given into Thine hands and thy most holy keeping. Amen.—MARTIN LUTHER.

—o—

Fénelon.

MY God, men know Thee not. They discern not who and what Thou art! The light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehends it not. By Thee we exist, we think, we taste pleasures, and forget Him by whom all this is caused. We see nought but by Thee, the universal light, the Sun of souls, who shinest more clearly than our material sun, and seeing nothing but by Thee we yet behold Thee not. Thou alone impartest all; to the stars their splendour, to the fountains their streams and currents, to the earth plants, to fruits their flavours, to flowers their beauty and perfumes, to all nature its riches, to man health, reason, virtues, graces; Thou givest, doest, rulest all. I see Thee, Lord, only. All else disappears as a shadow to the eyes of him who thus beholds

Thee; but the world discerns Thee not. Alas, he who does not discover Thee, has seen nothing: he has spent life in the illusions of a dream! as for me, O my God, I have found Thee everywhere; even within myself. It is Thou who effectest whatever I do that is good. A thousand times have I felt that I could not subdue my wrong tempers or destroy my habits, that I could not subdue my pride, nor follow my reason, nor continue to will the good that I once have willed. It is Thou who givest a right will, and who maintainest it incorrupt. Without Thee I am but a reed shaken by the wind. I leave myself, O God, in Thy hands: mould and remould this clay; give it right form, then break it, if such Thy will: it is Thine; it suffices that Thy counsel be fulfilled, and that nothing shall oppose Thy good pleasure, for which I was created.—FÉNELON.

—o—

Foster.

GRANT me, O my God, all that is necessary to make me, in the greatest practical degree, happy and useful. I feel myself so remote from Thee, Thou grand Centre, and so torpid. It is as if those qualities were extinct in my soul which could make it susceptible of Thy Divine attraction. But oh, Thine energy can reach me even here.

Attract me, Thou great Being, within the sphere of Thy glorious light; attract me within the view of Thy throne; attract me into the full emanation of Thy mercies; attract me within the sphere of Thy sacred Spirit's most potent influences! I thank Thee for the promise and the prospect of an endless life; I hope to enjoy it amid the "eternal splendour" of Thy presence, O Jehovah! I thank Thee for this introductory stage, so remarkably separated by that thick-shaded frontier of death which I see yonder, from the amplitude of existence. But oh! how shall I occupy the space of this stage, so as most *absolutely* to achieve its capital purpose—so as to take possession of what in heaven's judgment is its *utmost value!* Oh, do Thou seize my existence at its present point, and henceforward guide and model it Thyself! Images of excellence, of happiness, of real greatness, often appear to me and look at me with an aspect inexpressibly ardent and emphatic. Monitors! why do you accuse me? whither would you lead me? Yes, I will follow them, and try what is that scene to which they invite me. O my Father, give me Thy strength; inspire, conduct, and guide one of the unworthiest of all Thy sons!—JOHN FOSTER.

——o——

Pascal.

O LORD, whose Spirit is so good and gentle in all things, who art so full of mercy that not only the prosperities, but even the adversities which visit Thine elect are effects of Thy compassion; give me grace, I pray Thee, that I may not act like a heathen in the state to which Thy justice has reduced me, but as a true Christian, may acknowledge Thee as my Father and my God in whatever condition I may be placed, since the change of my state induces none in Thine, who art ever the same, though I am subject to changes, and art no less my God when Thou dost afflict and chasten, than when Thou hast consoled and indulged me. Grant me grace, O Lord, to correct my corrupt reason and conform my will to Thine! May I account myself happy in affliction, and that by rendering me powerless for outward activities, Thou so rectifiest my will that it no longer rebels against Thine. Be graciously pleased, O Lord, to join Thy consolations with my sufferings. Take from me the dejection which self-love would excite, at my own griefs and those events in the world which are contrary to my desires, but give me a sadness conformable to Thine. I will not implore [absolutely] health or sickness, life or death, but that Thou wilt order all these events

for the good of Thy church, and of Thy saints with whom by Thy grace I hope to be numbered. Thou alone knowest what is expedient for me. Thou art the Sovereign Lord! Bestow, or deny, but conform my will to Thine; and grant that in humble and complete submission, and in devout affiance, I may dispose myself to receive the ordinations of Thy eternal Providence, alike adoring all which proceeds from Thee!

Demand, ordain, forbid! What wilt Thou that I should perform, or refrain from? Uplifted, abased, consoled, suffering, engaged in Thy service, or laid by as useless, I will seek to adore Thee alike, surrendering my own will to Thine, saying, in all events, with Mary, "Be it unto me according to Thy word!"—PASCAL.

—o—

Behmen.

O THOU great, unsearchable, and holy Lord, Sovereign of all beings, who from Thy great love to us hast in Christ Jesus manifested Thy sacred Essence in our humanity, I, a poor sinful man, am come into Thy presence, though unworthy to lift mine eyes unto Thee, confessing that I have been false and faithless to the covenant of Thy love and grace, whereby Thou madest me a child and heir of life everlasting.

I have forsaken Thee, and given my desires to the vanities of this life, and thus defiled my soul. I lie in the mire of my fallen nature, and have only a little spark from the vital breathing of Thy Spirit within me, which invokes Thy grace. Without Thy strength I lie in impotence, and second death awaits me. Then am I in darkness, also, so that I know not my Saviour; and as a wild branch upon Thy vine, having wasted Thine heritage in the desires of this life. O God in Christ Jesus, who for the sake of poor sinners becamest man, that Thou mightest succour and save them, I hasten unto Thee, I mourn over my need, I flee unto Thee for help, for Thou art my only refuge, and towards Thee there is yet a spark of faith and trust in my soul. Take me, O Lord, into Thy death, and let my sinful life be therein destroyed. Strike me to the ground in my self-seeking, slay by Thy death my egoism, that I may no longer live to myself, but to Thee who hast died for me! O thou rich well-spring of God's love, let my vanity and sin die within me in the death of my Redeemer.

O thou breath of the great love of God, fan the small feeble spark of Thy own Spirit within me, that I may begin to hunger and thirst for Thee. How weak and weary is my soul! O give it to drink of the grace-stream of eternal life, that it

may awake from death. O conqueror of death, help me to fight the good fight, loose me from Satan's bonds! Vanquish my selfishness! Make my spirit contrite, that it may fear before Thee, and may, as Thy workmanship, be obedient to all Thy will. O thou profoundest Love, draw the desires of my soul to Thee, raise it from the bands of death to a spiritual resurrection!—Awaken in me a true and deep repentance for all past transgression.

O holy and faithful God, in myself I am blind and know not myself, Thou also by my blindness are concealed from me, although ever near. Let a beam of Thy precious grace penetrate and pervade my soul!

I wait relying on Thy promise: "As I live, I have no pleasure in the sinner's death, but that he turn and live." I sink into the death of my Redeemer, and I wait for Thee. Thy word is life and truth. Amen.—JACOB BEHMEN.

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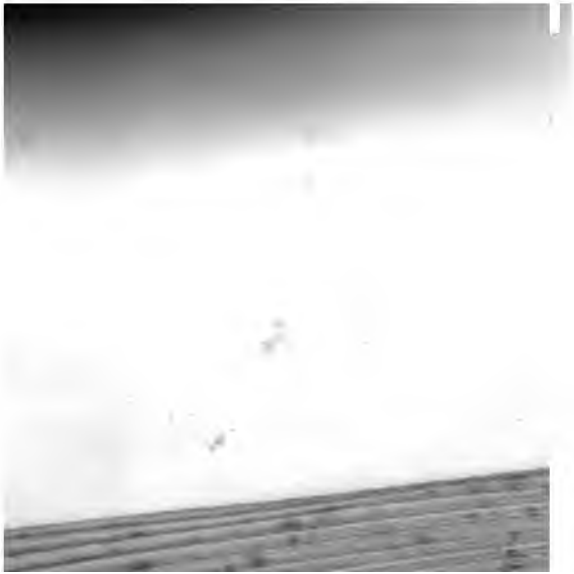

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